

Reflections on Our Lives with Arabian Horses

By Dick & Barbara Dady

When we were growing up, we never could have imagined our unlikely story in the Arabian horse world. By the time we met as sophomores at Cazenovia High School in 1953, Dick had spent his childhood on the nearby Dady family dairy farm and Barbara had moved around a bit before settling with her family near Syracuse from 4th through 9th grade. We both loved the outdoors and had an affection for horses, but when we later married in 1957, we did not envision a future in the horse business. As it turned out, however, we along with our four children, Dennis, Tim, Steve and Sarah, began a journey that would lead us to farms in six different states and travels around the world. We met remarkable people and horses along the way. What follows is a small portion of what we remember from our lives with Arabian horses.

Barbara:

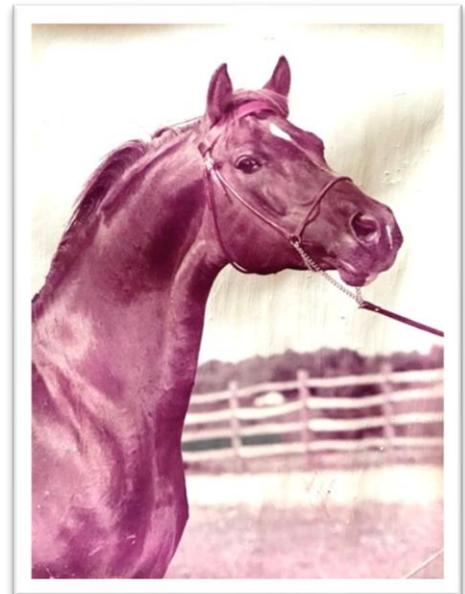
For a little girl of my generation, Walter Farley's Black Stallion series was what Harry Potter is to today's children, but just like the Potter series, the adventures of Alec and the Black seemed like a fantasy to me as a child. I would never have believed my future husband and I would own a purebred Arabian horse, much less care for hundreds of them.

I began at the bottom. When I was in 4th grade, we moved to an area just outside Syracuse where I attended a two-room country schoolhouse. On my walk to and from school I passed Tecumseh Stables. On my way home each day, I couldn't get by the farm without stopping. I would save my allowance for the occasional riding lesson, but mostly I hung out and made a pest of myself until they put me to work. Major Fout, a retired Cavalry officer, managed the stable. His teaching technique was unlike any I have encountered since. In his beginner classes, he would use a leader and all the rest of the horses were trained to follow the leader. It gave the kids the opportunity to work on their seats and balance before they had to worry about controlling the horse. As soon as I became halfway competent, I would lead three or four beginner classes every Saturday.

When I started working on my father to get a horse, he told me I could have one whenever I earned enough to buy one. He probably thought he was safe with this approach, but after a couple of years, I managed to buy my first horse for \$100. I boarded him with my friend Sue Haffenden, and we had a great time camping and riding all over. We had a place to swim the horses and a quarry we could pretend was the old West. I kept trading up and by the time my family moved to a farm near Cazenovia and I met Dick, I had a gelding I was conditioning for the Vermont 100-mile trail ride and a Thoroughbred mare. Poor Dick just had an ugly Appaloosa named Freckles at this point, but he had potential.

When we graduated from high school in 1955, Dick started college in Colorado, but after the first semester he and two of his buddies decided to join the Navy and see the world. He was lucky enough to be stationed in Hawaii. After I spent two years working, taking care of horses, and going to Cazenovia College, we got married and moved to Hawaii where we had two years without horses. We did get to watch polo in Kapiolani Park, but we were ready for a horse of our own once we made it home.

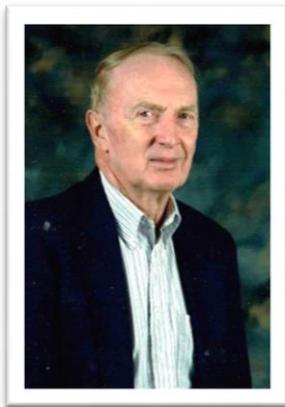
We bought our first Arabian at the craziest possible time.



*Jamin (Padishah x Rhapsodi)
43.36% Crabbet*

We had just built our first house near the Dady farm on Pompey Hollow Road and had three boys under the age of four. Our friend and farrier, Dick Stanton, told us about a woman in Sterling who had an Arabian stallion she wanted to sell. The last thing we needed was an Arabian stallion, but we agreed to at least look. This introduced us to Barbara Longley who has been a great friend for 60 years now. She thought her stallion, Jamin, deserved more than just riding around the countryside and wanted him to have a shot at the showring. We had to borrow from the college fund to buy him, but we thought we could earn the money back. At that point, Jamin's only contact with other horses had been when there was a mare to breed. While in most respects he was easy to train, we had a challenge keeping his mind on his work, and we were so green! We didn't even know what classes to enter. With a little help, we learned that he belonged in the stallion halter class and what was then called the 3-gaited class. Dick showed him in NJ and then at the NYS Fair where he was Champion Stallion, despite his unruly behavior. In those days, there was enough prize money that the fair paid our real estate taxes for years. Jamin placed consistently well in halter classes, but he was erratic in performance. It didn't help that we lacked a ring for training.

We struggled financially in those days and were always looking for ways to support the horse show habit. We had a couple of boarders who shared show expenses with us, and we turned our garage into a tack shop. We never made much money at it, but it did at least pay for our tack. We did a good bit of breeding, mostly unregistered mares. I think Jamin's stud fee was \$100 for purebreds and \$50 for all others. When you have a \$93 mortgage payment, \$50 isn't all that bad.



Dick:

After a couple of years with Jamin, we moved to Manlius, NY to a place with more acreage and started to train a few Arabs to supplement our income. I was selling real estate at the time and Barbara was working at Syracuse University and taking classes toward her bachelor's degree. We had become members of the Empire State Arabian Horse Association, and while I was attending one of their meetings, Bob Naukam, who was manager of Buttonwood Farm in Clifton Springs, NY, told me that he and his family were going to move and start their own business. He said Drew Morris, the owner of Buttonwood, was looking for a new manager/trainer if I was interested. I was very interested in the possibility of earning a livelihood in training/managing so we moved to Buttonwood and lived there for about two years.

Barbara:

What I remember most about Buttonwood is the year I spent teaching full time while Sarah, our youngest child, was in kindergarten. She spent her afternoons as her father's shadow, often accompanied by Bill Waaser, who frequently stopped by the farm on his way to anywhere. While the boys and I were in school, Sarah would ride her pony, Spring, while her father rode the Morris's *Serafix son, Royal Lancer++ (*Serafix x Marharetta).

While at Buttonwood, we became good friends with Connie Boyer and her daughter, Debbie. The Boyers, who lived in Geneva, bought Buttonwoods Ajib++ (Rifage x Roukala) and continued to board him at the barn. They went to many shows with Buttonwood and Debbie practically lived there during school vacations. She and her mother were always teaching Sarah some new skill. Connie enjoyed adding pieces to Debbie's costume (for the costume class), and Sarah still remembers Mrs. Boyer teaching her to braid and make tassels. Debbie coached Sarah for lead line on Ajib++ and always reminded her to smile for the judges.

Buttonwood's main show horses in this period were Royal Lancer++ (*Serafix x Marharetta). and Robbie Morris's mare, Soukkara (*Silver Vanity x Al-Marah Blue Bird). My memory fails me on the horses our boys rode, but at horse shows they were more into apple fights and uni-cycling with the Vesty brothers at this point.

Dick:

In the fall of 1971, we moved from Clifton Springs to Bazy Tankersley's Al-Marah Arabians in Barnesville, Maryland, about thirty miles north of Washington, DC. Jack Conner gets the credit or the blame for this move. We had known Jack at Black Watch Farm, and when he moved to Al-Marah as the farm manager, we visited there for the first time. He talked me into taking a job as trainer. We could only take two horses with us so Jamin went to the Naukums and Sarah's pony to a cousin. We moved to Al-Marah with our *Oran Van Crabbet daughter, Ardonhall Badia (*Oran Van Crabbet x Alibarra), and Barbara's gelding, Skyline Khi-Echo (Koecho x Skyline Khiyal). The first year, I trained horses, Barbara did substitute teaching and the kids settled into new schools and explored their new surroundings.

Barbara:

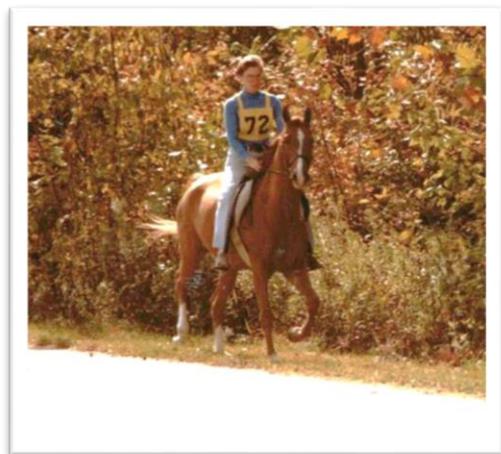
At this time, Bazy had set up a facility at Conoy, a residential community near Al-Marah, to provide training for residents' horses and to offer an apprentice program for girls interested in pursuing a career in the horse business. When the woman who managed it left, I took over the job there and eventually we built a house at Conoy and leased the facility from Bazy. I taught riding there practically full time. Bazy loaned me an excellent group of retired show horses to use for lessons. She also had me start a program for the Maryland School for the Deaf. Apprentices assisted with the lessons to help communicate with each child. A couple of the students got to ride in the annual horse show held at Conoy, and we did a demonstration in Virginia for fundraising. They were great kids!

Bazy loaned me AlMarah Monhomme (Count Bazy++ x Al-Marah Lady Fame) for the Maryland 50-mile ride. We won our division while our son Dennis won overall with an Indraff great grandson, Indratsal Gold (Al-Marah Scottie x Lewisfield Lily). Around the same time, my gelding Skyline Khi-Echo (Koecho x Skyline Khiyal) fooled everyone, myself most of all, by winning a big, 2nd level dressage class at the Potomac Horse Center against some top riders with their younger horses. Arabians weren't supposed to do that!

When Bazy was getting ready to move to Tucson, AZ, she decided to sell the Conoy facility. She gave us first refusal and offered good terms, but it was not economically feasible for us. We loved Barnesville and all the friends we had there, but there were no properties in that area in our price range. We ended up with a small Amish farm in Littlestown, PA just north of the Maryland border.

We spent the summer of 1975 going back and forth between Barnesville and Littlestown taking endless truckloads of junk to the dump, trying to make the house livable, and building our first horse stalls in an old pig barn. With four kids, we had a good supply of forced labor. They had all been working with horses at Conoy and were ready for new challenges.

We were very fortunate in that most of our clients moved their horses to our new farm. We had horses from John and Vickie Stroh, Garvin and Lee Tankersley and several one-horse owners. On



Barbara on a competitive trail ride...

weekends, we would often have a group come up to ride and then hang out in the kitchen for conversation and munchies. All the kids were starting to show by this time. Dennis had March King+/ (SS Finisimo x SS Desert Dream), Tim had Ardonhall Badia (*Oran Van Crabbet x Alibarra) & Baskwnuczua+ (Aatezar x Baskamira) and Steve had Craftique+ (Gai-Levantine x Rasroufa) and Alca-Sand++ (Desert Sands++ x Alcandre), Sarah had Indratsal Gold (Al-Marrah Scottie x Lewisfield Lily) “Beau” and later showed both Jacobask (*Bask++ x Suja++) and Basksand (*Bask++ x Alca-Sand++) in sidesaddle. The Strohs had two wonderful Bask sons, Baskcandre++ (*Bask++ x Alcandre) and Jacobask (*Bask++ x Suja++). Dick and the kids were all blessed with great horses to train and show. We also did a good bit of breeding, primarily with El Sahs (*Morafic x Rusa) and of course the great *Oran Van Crabbet (Oran x *Serafina), who spent his retirement standing stud at our farm.

In Littlestown, we had a close neighbor who started to come over and hang out around the farm. I can't stand idle kids, so I handed him a pitchfork. This was Eric Krichten who became part of our family and later went on to his own successful career with Arabian horses. We had great times with Judy Harris and her mom who volunteered to help at shows and were always a lot of fun. It was also the start of a long and wonderful friendship with Ron and Judy Powers from the Hancock, MD area.

We continued to renovate the barns and expand the business in Littlestown for several years, but once the boys grew up and began moving on, we debated hiring help or cutting back. We ended up selling the farm to our youngest son, Steve. Passing the torch to him led to the birth of Omni Arabians, a business he built and expanded over the next several decades. We moved just down the road where we had a small barn and continued to train a few horses including Pete Onle's *Ibn Safinez.

This was a period of transition not only for our family but for the U.S. Arabian scene. Our business had been primarily regional and most of our clients were people of modest means with a horse or two. By the mid-1980s, it was starting to go much more international. During his career, Steve showed all over the world and sold many horses abroad. After we sold the farm to Steve, Dick continued his judging career which he had begun many years earlier.

Dick (judging):

I acquired my Arabian judge's card in the late 1960s and judged Arabian shows for the next twenty-five years. It was a great time to be a judge as the Arabian industry was at its peak in the 70s, 80s and early 90s. The shows, for the most part, were well attended. Very early in my career, I was asked to judge a show in Santa Barbara, CA. Going to the West Coast, I knew the show would have plenty of entries. It was a three-day show, and the first morning when I arrived at the showgrounds, the show manager told me my first class, yearling fillies, would have 72 entries, all in the ring at the same time. My first thought was, “what did I get myself into?” Fortunately, the ring was huge, and the class went smoothly. All the classes were large and by the end of the show, I probably judged about 500 horses. After that, I figured I could judge any show, so I did for the next twenty-four years.

I was fortunate enough to judge many of the major shows in the United States and Canada, including several of the national championship shows. I also judged in Brazil, Australia, Uruguay and



*Dick judging at Crabbet Celebration 2019
TB Azza Melody (Gaiffredom x TB Azarappsody)
with Anya Love*

Israel. While in Israel, Barbara and I spent an extra five days touring the country. We also did a training clinic at a kibbutz near Haifa.

One of my most memorable moments was being inducted into the Arabian Horse Judges Hall of Fame in 2007, but meeting and judging with other judges was a highlight of this part of my career. Many became great friends and still are to this day. This is also true of show managers, secretaries, stewards, show photographers and ringmasters.

After retiring from judging Arabians, while I was managing a miniature Horse Farm in Virginia, I got my Miniature judging card. It was quite a change of pace from Arabians to Miniatures, but it was great fun and I judged Miniature Horse Shows for many years.



Dick:

In 1987, after five years at the small place in Littlestown, down the road from our original farm, I received a call from a friend in Texas telling me Joe Ogden, owner of Circle O Arabians, was looking for a manager. Soon after, I met Joe for the first time and was really impressed with him, his wife Anne, and their beautiful facility near Jarrell, Texas. Joe wanted to make sure Barbara agreed with the move so she visited the farm the next week. She agreed to move so we put our place on the market and moved to Texas. By this point, all our children were grown and living on their own.

Joe had recently sold his business and was devoting more time to his farm and Arabian horses. He was also involved with the Karho Arabian Farm in Scottsdale, AZ having invested in several horses there. Joe developed an interest in Russian-bred Arabians and traveled to Russia a few times to see horses there. He purchased and imported some nice stock. We had several *Muscat (Salon x Malpia) daughters on the farm, the most notable being Amber Satin (*Muscat x Satin Silver) and Muscavaya (*Muscat x *Mashhoorah).

Circle O was the ideal job for me. I had the pleasure of being in a great facility and working for a fair boss who was always interested, but let me manage without interference. I appreciated the help of two Mexican farm workers who were the best! Both were devoted to their jobs, never complained and put in long hours. The farm also employed two young ladies who worked with the young horses. Those with potential were then sent to Karho for more training and showing. We enjoyed our time at Circle O and still stay in touch with Joe and Anne.

Shortly after returning to the East Coast from Texas in 1989, I was hired by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hollman of Wycoff, NJ to manage and train their miniature horses. I spent a few months in New Jersey and then we moved the whole operation to a 225-acre farm near Woodville, VA—about 75 miles southwest of Washington, DC. The Hoffmans owned about forty miniatures when they moved to VA, but this number gradually increased through breeding and purchasing. Two top stallions, Brewer's Orian Sensation and Lucky Four Strike-Me-Silver were our leading sires. We foaled an average of 15 foals per year. Marilyn Hoffman loved to drive and show. We had a good show string and attended many shows throughout the East each year. We also attended national shows in Texas and Oklahoma. During the fourteen years I was at the farm, the miniature industry was doing very well. Sales were brisk and the income from sales was good.

I decided to retire in 2004, and Marilyn, who had carried on ten years after her husband died, decided it was time to sell the farm and most of the horses. I came back to PA with four of the show horses and we continued to show for a couple more years.

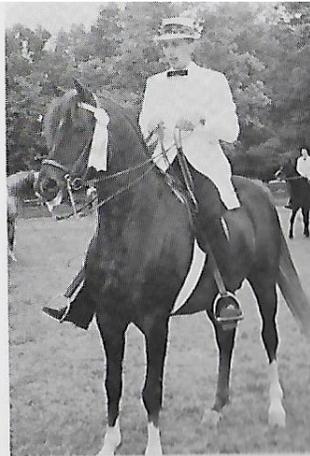
Final thoughts:

We have led what your average person might consider a crazy life and probably not one most people would seek. We could not take traditional family vacations, and we rarely had a day off. The horses still needed to be fed on Christmas morning. While our path has not provided us material wealth, it has certainly given us exceptional fringe benefits. For many years, we had the satisfaction and challenge of building and operating our own business. We raised hard-working and independent children who had the benefit of growing up outside, surrounded by beautiful horses and interesting people from all walks of life. Arabian horses have given us life-long friends and have taken us to places we never would have imagined.

Basic farm types like us didn't grow up expecting a paid trip to Australia where we could play with kangaroos and go from beach to river to mountains—a week of fun for a day of judging—or an amazing trip to Israel, being escorted from the Western Wall to the Via Dolorosa by police chief, Haim Barlev. We didn't expect our son Tim, who became a farrier, would have the opportunity to work on horses at Camp David or that Steve would work for royal families in the Middle East.

We now have six grandchildren and one great grandchild. Many of them have had opportunities to travel, either through Steve's work as a trainer, in the case of his children, or through other opportunities in college and the Peace Corps. Hopefully, each generation of our family will expand their horizons further in whatever paths they choose, but for us it all started with one Arabian horse.

Thanks to all those along the way who made it possible.



Courtesy Arabian Horse Yearbook 1963

JAMIN 9326 Phadisah x Rhapsody
Richard A. Dady
Wyckoff, New York Breeders, New York State Exposition