

## Benefactor of the Breed

### Jim Robbins

As I head into my “thank you so, very, very much” to ECAHS for honoring me this year, I need to preface this by saying that since I started writing farm stories, interviews with trainers and breeders and my own personal favorite, promoting the history, horses and people in our breed on social media, I have never written a piece about myself and my journey and love affair with Arabian horses. So, please cut me some slack. Hopefully you’ll learn something new and see through my eyes the funny, poignant and important parts of what makes our breed (to me) so special. Here we go...

I grew up in Denison, Iowa (the hometown of Donna Reed no less, how wholesome is that?). And from the time I could walk and talk I was interested in horses. My first exposure to them was with Grandpa Wolfe, my Mom’s dad, who had Belgian horses that he’d kept since he first started farming in his early 20’s. They were kind, sweet, even tempered animals, and huge, very huge. Especially when you’re five years old. I read every Walter Farley book our library had, collected Breyer horses to the



*Jim with some of his Breyer Collection*

point that my dad had to line my bedroom with shelves to display them and went to my grandparents every available weekend I could just so I could go to the barn. I dreamt of the day I’d get a horse of my own. My first horse was a grey Arab/Welsh gelding named Smokey. I would have been 12 at the time, working after school and on the weekends at my parents Dairy Queen for money to support Smokey, took what riding lessons I could afford and thought I was one step away from being the Lone Ranger. The barn where I boarded Smokey was owned by a lady who bred fairly high percentage cream/palomino part-Arabians. I thought

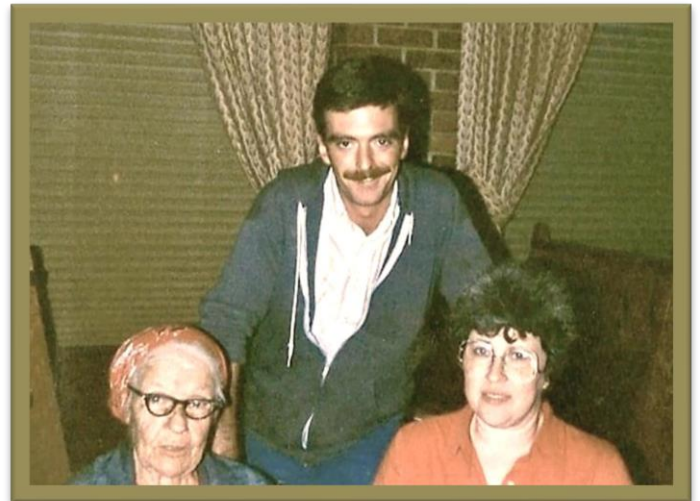
they were the most beautiful horses I’d ever seen and dreamed of owning one someday. I knew Arabians were special, but just didn’t know how special they were until I got my hands on the November 1971 issue of *The Arabian Horse World*, with Bint Sahara (Farawi x Bint Sedjur by Ribal) on the cover. It had a large story on Frank and Helen McCoy and their breeding program inside and I was hooked. I read that magazine so many times, it was dog eared, and I still have the cover and first 75 pages of it 50 years later. And, it’s still one of my most treasured possessions.

From then on, my life revolved around the mail-box and subscriptions to the *World*, *The Arabian Horse News* and later on the *Arabian Horse Times* when it started. I memorized every breeder, every horse they advertised and every pedigree of the horses advertised. A certain type of horse caught my eye, and I focused on them. Anything with \*Raffles (Skowronek x Rifala by Skowronek) in the pedigree immediately caught my attention. I relentlessly followed the breeding programs of Comar Arabians, Sunny Acres, Friendship Farms, Rookers, Partridge Hollow Park, Al-Marah Arabians, Henriksen Arabians, Shalimar Ranch, Manion Canyon, Lancer Arabians (they had Sotep), Thornhill Arabians and the list went on and on. If they bred \*Raffles horses, I wanted to know about every stallion, mare and foal they had. Still, to this day, the most perfect mare to me is Shimmering Star++ (Syzygy x Lalla Kadija by Al-Marah Radames), US National Champion Pleasure Driving and US Top Ten Mare. To me, she was and is the epitome of a stunning, well bred and athletic Arabian mare.

The more I learned about \*Raffles breeding programs, the more I realized that if you called these great breeders on the phone (remember, I was 14, 15 and 16 years old at the time), they loved to talk horses. I absorbed everything they said to me like a sponge. Long distance was expensive then, and my parents had fits about phone bills, but I got to call and learn from Margaret Shuey at Sunny Acres. She regaled me with stories of she and her father taking \*Roda (Mansour x Negma by Dahman), Rihani (\*Saoud x \*Muha) and their daughters back and forth to the Selby Stud to be bred to \*Mirage, \*Raffles, Image (\*Mirage x \*Rifala by Skowronek) and Rapture (\*Raffles x Rafla by \*Raffles). Miss Shuey then told me about acquiring Ibn Hanad (Hanad x Gamil by Kasar) and his dam, judiciously breeding them on her \*Raffles and \*Mirage daughters and how she moved forward generation after generation. The Sunny Acres horses were the foundation of Al-Marah, RB Fields, Donoghues and Friendship Farms, and had a huge impact at Lasma and Lewisfield Stud. It was an education in Arabian horse breeding that was priceless to me then and priceless to me now. Garth Buchanan, Lois Selby Perry, Gina Manion, Larry Thornhill, Jo Ellis and so many more gave me an education into bloodlines, faults, strong points, what worked and what didn't that I still draw from today when looking at horses and pedigrees.

Then, I started talking with Carolyn Hasbrook. She and her husband, Dick, had old Selby, Jimmie Dean and Comar breeding. They were relatively "new" breeders at that time, maybe 8 years at the most with Arabians and she'd work with me on getting a purebred Arabian. A Greyhound ticket was purchased, and I was off to Ames! That's when all of these amazing horses started coming to life. Carolyn took me to Comar Arabians to meet Garth and Joe Buchanan and see Azraff (\*Raffles x \*Azja IV by Landsknecht) and their incredible mares. They had groups of five and six full sisters, all by Azraff and out of Ferzon (Ferneyx x Fersara by Ferseyx) daughters who were out of Rafeyma (\*Raffles x \*Kareyma by Naseem) and her daughters by \*Raffles and Ibn Mirage (\*Mirage x \*Kareyma by Naseem). The consistency in their program was incredible, especially when you looked out on a field of 40+ alabaster white mares that all were virtually identical. We went to Dick and Jo Ellis' to see the recently crowned US National Champion Futurity Colt, Lea Baron (Azraff x Lea Geymette by Geym) and their mares, which were sired by Azraff, Ferzon, Geym (\*Raffles x Rageyma by \*Mirage), Gay-Rouge (Azraff x Gay-Rose by Ferzon) and Gai Parada+++ (Ferzon x Azleta by Azraff). Another amazing group of big, elegant, mostly grey mares that took your breath away. Hasbrooks foundation horses were equally as stunning. Their original mares were Azja (Razja x Capriola by Azraff), Geyntrice (Geym x Lalla Kadija by Al-Marah Radames), Genima (Geym x Nima by Image) and the Jimmie Dean bred stallion, Phanoly (Azy x Phleta by \*Raffles). That first trip to Ames (of many, many trips there) cemented my love of Selby/\*Raffles/\*Mirage bred horses to this day.

Since that fateful trip to Ames, I've been extremely fortunate over the years to have had some lovely mares and stallions. In retrospect, I didn't always know what I had at the time and I would have done things differently, but then again hindsight is always 20/20. Many of the mares I got in old age, tried to get "one last foal out of them" and wound up spending every cent I had putting a down payment on a vacation home for my vet! The mares I remember most fondly were JB Azmistress



**Garth Buchanan-Jim-Carolyn Hasbrook**

(Azraff x JB Armisstess by Sotep), MJR Kubreymah (Kubriya x Feymah by Feybryia), MJR Neeshaq (Aaraq x Neesha by Sotep), Cartelle (Carmargue x Lalla Palluza by Azy), P R Munequita (\*El Shaklan x Rahmishkah by \*Barich De Washoe) and BF Sweet Dreams (BF Rageymazon x Gai Dream by Gay-Rouge), the most exquisite full sister to Dreamazon+++ and sadly unbreedable. Stallion-wise, I was fortunate to have some cool stallions over the years. Athar (Mohssen x Motaj by \*Morafic) was from the same mare family as Surf++ (Sureyn x Jubilema by Jubilo) and was one of the sweetest, most correct Egyptian/Crabbet cross stallions. Shah Zoom (Ansata Shah Zaman x Infinitie by Syzygy, a full sister to Shimmering Star++), who I showed and won a huge stallion class at an early Oregon Crabbet Show. Bruce Clark, one of the judges, told me he was the most Skowronek looking horse he'd ever judged. And then F-Sharp (BF Rageymazon x BF Gallant Lady by Overlook Jordji+++), a stunningly beautiful and sweet horse of Gainey breeding. He was third at Scottsdale one year in a class of nearly 100 colts, rarely was defeated in most classic head classes and won the Cal-Bred Futurity twice! I had him down at Al-Marah showing him in 1997 at a Tucson show, he won the ATH stallion class with me and then I took him back in the open class. I got distracted for a minute, he reached out and grabbed my tie, with me attached, and started backing all the way around the arena pulling me right along with him! Bazy was sitting there in the stands watching and just roared laughing. I sold F-Sharp to the Hasbrooks. They bred with him quite a bit and he lived out his life at the home of Jimmie Dean's granddaughter, Pooh Daniels.

In 1991, the Oregon Crabbet Show had one of the most fun judging panels ever. Dr. Bill Munson came, along with his wife Mae, for the show. One of the most prolific \*Raffles breeders of a 50 year span, Bill was also a highly regarded judge for many decades as well. I honestly don't remember who the second judge was, old age is setting in. And, the third judge was Tish. Or, to be more formal, Mrs. Patricia Deere Wiman Hewitt. Over the years I was lucky enough to purchase four Friendship Farms mares; Dancing Gem (Raffi x Geybima by Geym), The Future (Ibn Geym x Forecast by Raffi), Chimes (Firebrand x Campana by Geym) and Participate (Llano Grande Conquistador x Paragon by Ibn Geym). With the acquisition of these mares came a friendship with Mrs. Hewitt, a legendary philanthropist, humanitarian, horsewoman (and breeder) and friend.



***Jim-Tish Hewitt-Mae Munson-Bill Munson-Georgia Cheer-Garrett Smith***

What can I say about my time with Tish? I learned more about the Selby Stud (she purchased the entire herd, except for Image), \*Raffles and \*Mirage bred horses and the history of our breed than I could have ever hoped to learn. For a small town, working class kid, I got to see the world both through her stories she shared with me and the traveling I was fortunate to do with her. Some of my most touching and most humorous moments in horse life occurred because of Tish. That was Tish. My favorite times with her, were our dinners together up at the "big house" in Rock Island. She'd call last minute and invited me up, we'd eat in this huge living room on TV trays in front of the

TV, watching the news and talking horses. Frolic, her favorite Jack Russell would be in either her lap or mine begging for scraps. Those were the moments I remembered most of my time at Friendship. She passed, very suddenly, at a cattle show in Omaha. We had plans to have dinner at the big house when she got home that night, but it was not meant to be. After her memorial service, at the luncheon, I went over to offer my condolences to Mr. Hewitt and thank him for my time at Friendship. He took

my hand in his, and thanked me for being there for Tish, as she always enjoyed our time together. A special time and a special place.

After my return to Portland, I continued writing articles and doing interviews for my great friend, Georgia Cheer, for both *The Crabbet Influence* and the *Western Arabian News* magazines. The opportunities and friendships I made through these writings were some of the most special ones of my life. I was fortunate to interview Bill Munson of Shalimar, Kay Patterson, Robin Gainey, Gene LaCroix, Bob and Ginger Detterman, The Lervick Arabians, Bazy Tankersley of Al-Marah and of course, both Garth Buchanan of Comar and Tish Hewitt of Friendship Farms. Having Sheila Varian tell me first-hand about "Winning the World" on Ronteza (\*Witez II x Ronna by Faronek), and then sending me a hand-written note after her interview came out thanking me for the insightful job I did is just one of the many special memories I have of this time in my life. The friendships forged during these pieces are still with me today. So many memories... Watching Patrick Swayze fight off the floods in the stalls at Scottsdale, to bartending for several years at the Midwest Patrons Box at the Nationals in Louisville to leading the great eight times National Champion Red Tape+// (\*Bask++ x Delaharin by Naharin) to his stall and settling him in at one of the ECAHS events in Wakefield. Priceless pieces of the tapestry of my life with Arabians, that I'm grateful for every day.

Like many folks, I got my first computer, a dinosaur by today's standards, in 1994. Once I discovered the world of the Internet and how amazing it was to talk to other Arabian breeders around the world, my life changed forever. Facebook has been my social media platform of choice, for the past dozen or so years, and I use it to showcase our small breeding program, stay in touch with family and horse friends and occasionally post the inappropriate, snarky meme. But, my real joy on Facebook is sharing the history of the Arabian horse with newcomers to our breed. I love telling them the importance of Alice Bracker and The Rose Prince (Pierre of Aldachar x Bride Rose by Ronek), the importance of Naseem (Skowronek x Nasra by Daoud) in a pedigree and without him the effect would be felt in virtually every major breeding program in the world. And, I try to guide the newcomers to our breed. It's quality over quantity, two great mares will have as many great foals as ten average mares and breed the best to the best with a vision in mind of producing the best breeding, performance and well conformed horse one can breed. And, last but not least, pedigrees are powerful things. The only thing that will come out in a new foal is what is there in their pedigree. So, breed wisely my friends.

Today at R-Farm, my partner Tim Kelly (who is truly the one who makes all this work!) and I have been in the country outside Portland for 12 years now. We don't breed much, but when we do breed we always try to produce a better individual that is solid, beautiful, even tempered and able to be put under saddle. Our mare lines go back to the great ones. Focus Coquette (Prince Fanali x Focus Sabrina by Focus Alimus+/) goes to the great W. R. Brown import, \*HH Mohamed Alis Hamida (Manial x Mahroussa by Mabrouk), bred by Prince Mohamed Ali. Sabrina RF (Arbiteur x Scarlett O Rahar by Gai Cartier) goes back to the Selby Stud matron, \*Indaia (Raseem x Nisreen by Nureddin), bred by Lady Wentworth, our late, great Blyss (Retador x Bountyful Queen by \*Bask++) goes to the W. K. Kellogg import, \*Rossana (Skowronek x Rose of Hind by Rejob), one of the most exquisite Skowronek daughters bred by Lady Wentworth. And, our boys are bred just as



*Tim Kelly and Benji (Accolade RF)*

*Mike Hartman Photo*

well. LC Athens (Regal Actor JP x Genevieve C by Genesis C) and his close relative, LC Araan (LC Arlington+ +// x Simply Royal by Centurion MM), both tail-female to the stunning Selby Stud foundation mare, Slipper (Yima x Sabot by \*Euphrates) through her Mirage daughter, Pera. And, then there's Benji. Aka, Accolade RF (LC Athens x Blyss by Retador). He's been my first (and only) orphan foal in going on fifty years. Blyss colicked when he was 4 days old and we lost her, there wasn't a dry eye in the barn that day. Tim fed him by bottle, every two hours, around the clock for the first 2 months and believe it or not we kept him alive! The bond they have is about the best thing around. I almost forgot Maryanna RF (Escape Ibn Navarone-D x Gwyna VF by Ludjin El Jamaal). Not a traditional CMK mare, she combines the best of several World Champion Stallions, on a mare line going back to Gwyndalyn (\*Bask++ x \*Gwyn by Comet), one of the most exquisite mares bred by Dr. and Mrs. LaCroix. That's the whole "fam-damily" here at home and our hope for the future.

In closing, and in grateful thanks to the ECAHS folks that honored me with this award, I want to tell a little story about a horse of "modern day" show horse breeding and where he comes from. Six years ago my dad was at home in hospice, one of the greatest men I've known, and at night I'd watch him on a monitor so as he could get some sleep and we could still make sure he was ok. I spent a couple of weeks, late at night, and took LC Athens, Brazilian, Bey Shah+ and old domestic breeding, back to the desert. This is what I found. He carries 457 crosses to Mesaoud (Aziz x Yamama III by Shueyman), 177 of them through his sire, Regal Actor JP (\*Encore Ali x More Pretty JP by \*Laddin BA) and 280 through his dam, Genevieve C (Genesis C x Galizja

of Rohan by Wizjon). Mare-lines are incredibly important to me, and Athens carries the following pedigree elements; 217 crosses to Rodania (Desert bred), 86 crosses to Dajania (Desert Bred), 211 crosses to Queen of Sheba (Desert Bred), 47 crosses to the Ali Pasha Sherif bred, Bint Helwa (Aziz x Helwa by Shueyman) and 123 crosses to Jellabiet Feysul (Desert Bred). Under the miscellaneous category, Athens also carries: 52 crosses (and four possible more) to the great Skowronek. This may not be overly interesting to most, but the way the crosses are distributed is, LC Athens carries 13 crosses to Naseem, three crosses to Naziri (Naseem's better brother, who Lady Wentworth hid off-site when the Russians came to purchase Naseem) and two crosses to their full sister, Nasifa. Athens has 17 crosses to \*Raseyn, three crosses to \*Raffles and four crosses to \*Raswan. The Skowronek daughters included are four crosses to \*Rifala, one cross to Jalila, one cross to Naxina, two crosses to \*Rossana, one to \*Incoronata and one to \*Crabbet Sura, Athens also has four crosses to the Duke of Veragua mares, one to Veracruz, one to Veranda and two to Verana, who is the dam line behind \*Estopa and Escape Ibn Navarone-D.

The "teachable moment" behind all of this? CMK, or Russian, or Polish, or Egyptian or Spanish, our horses today are all fibers in the same tapestry of the Arabian breed. Go forth and learn, study, read and learn some more, to breed and train the best quality Arabians you can. Remembering at all times, that newcomer at the show or visiting your farm, asking all those questions, is the most important part of the future of our breed. Thank you again so much, Jim Robbins, R-Farm...



**LC Athens (\*Regal Actor JP x Genevieve C by Genesis C)**

*Nancy Pierce Photo*



**Keeper (FFC Imageyn x Finders Keeper by Llano Grande Couistador)**

*Scott Trees Photo*

*The lovely and sweet Keeper foaled in 1985, bred by Friendship Farms. Purchased from Tish Hewitt's son, Sandy. After several years she was re-purchased into the Hewitt family by Adrienne Deere Hewitt, Tish's daughter and Sandy's sister. She truly was a special mare and ethereal in her quality.*



**Giborr (PHP Brilliance x Reverie Gida by Wasl Raffles)**

*The last of his kind, Giborr foaled in 1982. He was bred by the late Pat Model in NY State, stood nearly all of his life in obscurity, then she passed and Jim was able to purchase him. He was arguably the last Lois Selby Perry "bred" stallion, by a stallion and out of a mare she bred. Not in a position to have a stallion at the time, a dear friend, Francie Schermerhorn of Rahar Arabians took him where he lived out his life and sired some gorgeous foals.*

*Lovely and correct he was foaled in 1983. An incredible halter career as a young horse and undefeated in Most Classic Head. After owning him in the mid-90's, he was sold to Dick & Carolyn Hasbrook who have some gorgeous daughters by him. F-Sharp lived out his days at Pooh Daniels, Jimmie Dean's granddaughter's,*



**F-Sharp (BF Rageymazon x BF Gallant Lady by Overlook Jordji+++)**

*Foaled in 2009, bred by Lucy Whittier, sired by a full brother to Bey Ambition, LC Arlington+ +// who has ten US National Top Tens in halter and many Hunter Pleasure Championships, LC Araan was champion stallion the only time shown, is Tim's best friend at R-Farm and is the stallion that "raised" Benji after his mother died suddenly.*



**LC Araan (LC Arlington+ +// x Simply Royal by Centurion MM)**

*Nancy Pierce Photo*