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HAPPY TRAILS

Quarter horses are her passion

By Laurie Arendt
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When Joan Kruse gets ready to log a few miles, she leaves the car at home. Her transportation of choice is her equine friend, Brumbie Jet, an American quarter horse. And her route to work never includes traffic jams or road rage, since she hits the trails and fields at Pinewood Farm, the Kruse family farm in the town of Jackson.

"I have been riding Jet for years, and I never really logged my hours," says Kruse. "But someone suggested that I enroll in the American Quarter Horse Association Horseback Riding Program so I could get credit for the hours that we have spent on the trails."

So she enrolled and recently received an award for logging 50 hours, the first recognition level in the AQHA program.

But it's merely one more recognition for a local woman who's harbored a passion for horses for nearly 30 years.

"My husband and I were both born and raised in Milwaukee, and when our children were young, I wanted to find a job that would allow me to stay home with them," she says. "We both liked horses and decided to purchase this farm."

That first summer, their daughter, Debbie, turned 3, and for her birthday, she received a 3-year-old pony she named Lollipop. Both Joan and husband Norm owned their own horses, and they rented space to one boarder.

The family became involved in 4-H, joining the countywide horse project through Covered Bridge 4H Club. Joan has logged 20 years in 4-H; her husband has almost as many years in as well.

Though Norm and the Kruse children competed in horse shows, Joan has always been more of a trail rider. "I'm not really a competitive person," she says. "I like to ride on the trails, and I think the horses seem to like it better than the ring as well. When they are cooped up in their paddocks and realize that we're going to take a trail ride, they really perk up."

Among local horse farms, Pinewood Farm is on the smaller end, but that's OK with the Kruse family.

"We've always been a small farm," says Kruse, who notes that over time the farm continued to grow and now includes five Kruse-owned horses, 15 boarded horses, two barns, indoor and outdoor riding stalls and miles of trails. The farm, at 715 Highway 60 (Cedarburg mailing address) is main-

trained by Joan and Norm and their son, John.

Though the Kruse children are now grown, the Kruses' five grandchildren occasionally come back for a ride on the horses.

"All of our horses are people friendly," says Kruse. "Because of this, we felt they would also enjoy being used on a regular basis to teach more children and adults the basics of horsemanship."

The end result has been a growing interest in sharing horsemanship with children and adults. In 1993, when Kruse says she was "finished being my children's chauffeur," she started the annual Horsemanship Day Camp, with sessions held throughout the summer.

Children 6 years of age and older spend their time learning how to lead, groom, saddle, bridle, mount and ride. They also learn safety rules and practices, characteristics of the horse breed and proper care for the horses.

Throughout the year, the Kruses also hold special events for the children, such as campouts, trail rides and ongoing lessons.

"The American quarter horse is a very calm, quiet and sensible horse," says Kruse. "It is a nice breed to introduce children to who want to learn more about horses. Plus, these activities also give our horses a chance to interact with people and get a little exercise."

The quarter horse, often used in herding livestock, originally was bred for competition in short-distance races, usually a quarter of a mile, thus the name.



Joan Kruse of Pinewood Farm enjoys introducing children to the pleasures of horseback riding. They learn early about how to lead, groom, saddle, bridle, mount and ride.

Horses at Pinewood Farm (left) include five of the Kruses' own, plus 15 boarders. The farm, which is in the town of Jackson but has a Cedarburg mailing address, has two barns, indoor and outdoor riding stalls and miles of trails.

Photos by Laurie Arendt

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