

Angie McGhee & Kaboot Herlong



AERC Decade Team



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2950 Miles, 51 ride completions

First AERC ride: 1994 Region: SE

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? In 1993 I'd had a horrible year. I'd sold my sound (but very boring) horse that I'd ridden for 2 seasons without a pull and bought another horse that was wonderful to ride & train, but wasn't sound in competition. I decided to sell it, then it shattered its splint bone while out in the field and I had to sell my backup horse to pay for the surgery. (Major low point of life) About that time long time endurance rider Danny Herlong called my house and said, "I hear you sell horses sometimes and I've got a little gray horse here that I don't need." I told him that the only horses I bought and sold were kid horses and he said, "Well this AIN'T no kid horse." I told him that it just so happened that I didn't have a horse but that I didn't have any money either until the hurt one was well enough to sell. He said, "Just take this one, ride it and pay for him when you get the money if you like him and if you don't just send him back. I said "I'm not breaking your horse for you. I'll take him, ride him, and if I don't like him I'll sell him for a profit." We argued price for a while. He wanted \$100 more than I wanted to give. When he said, "I GUARANTEE this horse will win a race." I said "then I'll give you the other \$100 when he wins a race." About 7 years later I gave him his \$100. That was our only win but it was worth the money.

Danny lived in South Carolina and I lived in Tennessee so he brought him to me at the War Eagle ride. When he handed me the rope he gave me the advice, "You might want to lunge him a little before you ride him--to get the hump out of his back." I rented a stall for him in the barn where they had the ride

meeting. During the meeting, every time everyone applauded he would throw himself up against the walls. I took him out for a walk and he knocked me down. I kind of wondered what I'd gotten into. Years later one of my friends commented, "You know, he's really turned out nice. When you got him I thought, 'My gosh, Angie got a fat pony.'" When I saw Danny later he asked, "Did he buck any?" When I said, "No," he said, "Damn, they told me he liked to buck." The next time I saw him he asked, "What's he like?" I told her some things about how he rode and she said, "He was always kind of wild" and my riding buddy jumped in and assured her, "He still is!"

What is your horse's breeding? His Sire was Abu Fahir (by Al Fahir out of Halyna) I think someone told me Halyna went to some of the same horses as the HCC horses. Abu Fahir was a successful Competitive Trail horse. I was only told that Kaboot's dam was a "Little English bred mare." Kaboot is purebred but they didn't register him.

Sex: Gelding

DOB: May 1989

Horse height: 14.2

Approx. Weight: 840

Color: Gray

Shoe size: 1

Or, Easyboot size: 2 (very round bell shaped hooves)

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? Danny sent me a video of him lunging. His hooves were grown out, he had on a halter about 3 sizes too big, he didn't go overboard with presentation, but when Kaboot was trotting away from the camera he spread out a mile in the back. I'd always liked horses that trotted wide in the rear and this was the widest power trot I'd seen. I liked the fact that he was very solid with a strong chest. There's nothing wispy about him but he's definitely not clunky either. I just loved his stance from the front. I think his chest is perfect. I also liked him being short. I love being able to get on from the ground. In the video Danny said, with his strong South Carolina accent "His name is KaBOOT, but he will answer to most anything." At least that's what I thought he said so I named him Kaboot Herlong. I had no idea where he came up with Kaboot but Danny's a pretty unusual guy and I wouldn't have expected a normal name from him. I usually like to name my own horse but I liked Kaboot and kept it. Years later Molly Herlong sent me a card that said, "Thank you for taking such good care of Khabou," so as it turned out it was Danny's accent that gave him the original name.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes, but he's the first that really fit me.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? Of my own, 4. I've ridden nine others just catching a ride here or there. The mileage on the three I owned was 50, 500, 0 and 2,900. I've got 350 on other people's horses plus 4 LD's. The 0 was the beautifully behaved, smooth, sound at home horse that I had just before Kaboot. He had 4 straight pulls in his career. He really made me appreciate Kaboot.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Not any more. When I was a kid I tried barrel racing, western pleasure, galloping racehorses on a bush track, and lots of trail riding. Once I found

out where the endurance rides were I never looked back.

How many years have you been involved with horses? 33 In endurance? 17. I got my first pony 33 years ago at age 10. Did my first endurance ride in 1987, so 17 years of endurance. I've never taken any time off from horses since the first day I got that pony.

What got you interested in endurance riding? The first time I heard of it I knew I'd love it. I wrote a paper on it in high school 10 years before I got to try one. I was not into tradition. I constantly questioned authority and when other disciplines said you had to do things a certain way I constantly asked "Why?" and they never seemed to have a satisfactory answer. I read everything I could find in magazines like Equus on the horse--what made them tick. What they were best suited to do etc. and Endurance was the only sport I ever saw that always made sense. I loved to trail ride but had been an athlete in school and was competitive. Endurance allowed me to turn my hobby (trail riding) into a sport. It also allowed me to test myself on what I'd learned in all that studying I'd been doing. It was like I finally got to take a test on all that studying I'd been doing. I can honestly say that though I have a non-equine college degree I have studied far more information on horses than on any other subject.

What was it that kept you interested? I like always having a reason to ride *today*. I'm a goal setter. I need to be working towards something all the time. I like being able to set my own personal goal whether it's completing 5 50's in one year, or going for a jacket. I really like the type people who are in endurance riding and it's worth going to a ride to me just to socialize. Endurance rides are the only place I've ever felt like there were other people in the world like me.

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? I got him 2 months shy of turning 5. He'd been green broke his 4 year old year. He had had someone on his back but never had a bit in his mouth. I don't think he'd been ridden much since he still weaved under a person's weight. He did his first 50 in September of his five-year-old year. He would have done his first in late August but he ran away with me, fell and I had to have my collarbone plated--the first of two plated collarbones he's blessed me with. I thought it was ironic when I called AERC to find out what his official AERC number was going to be. The lady on the other end said, "Kaboot Herlong is one for 9-1-1." I said, "You've got that right" 14911 has always been easy to remember since then.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? 1994 3-50's (just rode in the Fall)

1995 1-50 (completed one in the Spring, injured tendon sheath in next but didn't know it, pulled, then started another ride and the tendon sheath tore and we pulled and took the rest of the year off)

1996 5-50's 1-55

What mileage distance did you start with? 50. He's never done an LD.

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'? He top tenned early but it was a mistake on my part. My other

horses had been the type that cheated on you sort of loafing along with no impulsion after the first loop. He was something totally new for me and I top tenned in his 2nd ride simply because I didn't realize how fast he was going. I slowed down and did 2 slow years after his first lameness. That taught me a lesson that just because he felt like it was easy for him it didn't mean his soft tissue was ready to go that hard. I was lucky to get a 2nd chance. So, he started in 1994, he did his first 100 in 1997 and then he started speeding up on 50's. and had several top 10's. In 1999, his fifth season he did 8 50's all top 10, 6 of those top 5, and one 100. I guess you could say we were late bloomers.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? I had very little money, and very small children when we were getting started so it was all I could do to go to 6 or so rides per year. If I get several rides in the Spring or Fall season I give him a month off after the string of rides.

If you have done 100's, how much time off do you give after doing one? Don't touch him for at least a week. Don't compete for several. I've heard it's good to wait a month to do another 100. I tried one within 3 weeks once and that was his only lameness pull on a 100 so maybe they're right.

What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? Much different now than when he was young. When he was young we rode lots of hours, but not very hard. My year is broken into two parts, Spring and Fall. 90 days before the first ride of the Spring I'd start trying to ride consistently--slowly picking up intensity of hill work and adding some high heart rate training. As the ride gets close, 2 weeks away or so I'd back off and just do maintenance--just trotting and walking down hills. Pretty easy stuff. The week of the ride I'd just keep him loose with some easy riding. Now that he's older and has such a base condition isn't the problem, soundness is. I ride less and just keep him loose. Post ride is the same as always. The week after the ride I don't touch him. Once the rides start hitting every couple of weeks I just do maintenance riding, mild stuff between the rides. In mid-June after the Spring season is over I might give him a month off before slowly gearing back up for the Fall rides. Then he'd compete late August through mid November and have from mid-November until about New Years off.

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? Haven't done any.

What kind of tack do you use? I ride an old Ortho-Flex Express (#003 the third ever made) that's got a 14" seat so it's pretty short. I use a wool Toklat barrel type pad with a little shim pad made of felt I use to balance the saddle, a string mohair girth, old Ortho-Flex 1 1/2" wide biothane breast collar, Ortho-Flex neoprene crupper, Toklat splint boots. Biothane halter bridle, full cheek snaffle bit, nylon reins (no snaps, don't trust'em) and a running martingale.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots? For most of his career St. Croix Eventers with no pads. I've put Easyboots on over them when I needed pads. Right now he's wearing half rounds with rim pads.

What kind of problems have you encountered? When he was younger he used to "outrun his stomach." He would be so competitive that when he was in the vet check he'd stop eating every time a horse left out on the trail and want to go with them. He'd do great until his gut sounds dropped off and then I'd really have to slow down and get him to eat. Once he got the gut sound back up he was ready to

go and full of energy. I never ran out of horse, but I had to slow him down to wait on his stomach. As he got older he was fantastic metabolically but little lameness's would show up here and there. I guess if it's not one thing it's another.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? I've been lucky that he's never had any sort of accident...except the ones where he used me to break his fall. His worst injury I guess was at the beginning of what was supposed to be his first full season at age 6. I did a ride in ridiculously deep sand when we had none to train in and he tore a tendon sheath. The vet asked me what sort of timetable he had to deal with--how fast did I have to have him back? I said, "I want this horse to last forever." He said, "Great, give him four months off." I was devastated, but ended up giving him six for good measure. It never bothered him again.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. I guess it was the Liberty Run 100 in 2000. At the start of the ride in the dark another rider complained about my light so I reached down on the breastcollar and turned it off at a very fast trot. Kaboot thought a black hole had opened up in front of him and slammed on the brakes and I broke my little finger on the reins. The rest of the day I couldn't hold him back very well so we came in third. He'd been trying to tell me he could go faster all those years and I didn't believe him but he had that day to prove me wrong. It was the only 100 we ever finished before dark. I'll never forget at the 85 mile mark when we were on our next to last loop when Valerie Kanavy and Bearcat O'Reilly were riding along with us on their last loop. She galloped up a long grade and I made Kaboot walk. When we got to the top he ran away with me to catch Bearcat. I thought any horse that will run away with you at 85 miles deserves to be doing 100's.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? There really haven't been bad days, maybe bad accidents but not bad rides. He's always "on" and good to go. I can't think of one I've had to nurse him through motivation or energy wise. As far as accidents, we've had a few. We were at the Hallelujah 100. Everyone I was riding with had been pulled, the ride felt long and I was feeling down. I tried to talk the vet into pulling me at the 80 mile mark by telling him how tired my horse was but when he said "Trot him" and Kaboot took off without me the vet said, "You can do what you want but he's the best looking thing that's been through." I headed out on the last 20 miles and started feeling pretty good. It was a nice night and I thought this was going to be all right after all. Then suddenly at a very fast trot he tripped and did a somersault. It was so dark I didn't see that we were falling so I didn't even lift my hands to break my fall. I had a flashlight on a string around my neck and I think I still have the imprint of it on my ribs. I pulled because I thought my ribs were broken, but looking back I wish I'd kept going. He was fine.

What was your most humbling experience? Trying to slow him down on the flat stretch along the river at Biltmore. He could see horses a mile ahead and meant to catch them. When you pull for all you're worth and it has no affect it's humbling--especially when it's a horse that has a talent for summersaults.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Perfect shoeing and balanced riding are the twin holy grails and I do have all the time in the world to start a horse slowly. I used to think about one year or two was a lifetime. Now it doesn't seem like a very big deal when you look at the big picture.

Where does your horse live? He lives at my home. We have six acres, approximately 4 of which is his

pasture. It's a cherty steep hillside. The grazing isn't worth mentioning so he gets hay year round. He has a run in shed. I also have a couple of stalls but he hates stalls. He does have the sense to come in out of the rain though. There is one more Arab and 2 Welsh ponies in with him. He's the boss.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of his life? He ran in a fair sized herd in South Carolina. Danny told me (after I bought him) that one night when he was a foal all the horses got out and ran all night. The next day he said Kaboot was locked up tight, couldn't move--possibly tied up. If I'd known that I might have been afraid to buy him. He's never cramped or tied up though.

What are your horse's strengths? He is the most motivated horse I've ever known. His whole being is focused on forward motion. He has very good ground manners, can be unloaded at a truck stop or in the drive through line at McDonalds (we've done it) without getting upset. Hauls well, camps well, doesn't go off his feed.

Weaknesses? He wants to go so fast that I have to fight him a lot. If he were relaxed he could save himself a lot of energy.

What advice do you have for new riders? Take your time.

Looking back, what would you do differently? The first year I'd have just piddled along. I thought I had to find out whether he was worth 2 years of LSD. He sort of had to prove he had speed, then I slowed down and did 2 slow years--but it cost me that 6 months of rehab from the torn tendon sheath.

What do you feel you did right? Sponsored a junior whose horse was slower than him for 2 years. We had to pace for her horse and it forced me to slow down. Kaboot learned a lot from that horse. To tell the truth he was pretty laid back until he did his first 100, then on his next few 50's he just took off.

What was your highest goal for your horse? 10 years, 3000 miles and 10 100 milers.

Did you achieve it? No. We've made 10 years, and need 1 more 50 to make 3000 miles, but we only did 7 100's. I'm worried that he may not do any more 100's.

Describe your horse's personality. How is it like or unlike yours? I don't know that it's like mine, but it suits mine. Before Kaboot I loved riding different horses all the time. I got bored quickly. I had one very sound, reliable horse that I competed for 2 years without a pull and was bored out of my mind. I have never been bored with Kaboot. He's been a constant challenge. He isn't silly, but he is difficult. He's tough, proud and competitive. One reason 100% of his rides have been done with me is that nobody else wants to ride him. I think riders tend to loan a high mileage horse after they feel they've learned all they're going to learn from him and they get a little bored, or think he could help some new endurance rider out because he's really steady. Kaboot has never gotten to that point. I'm not bored and he's not steady. He's only had a couple of other people ever get on his back. The first time he broke my collarbone I couldn't ride for a month after having it plated so I talked my husband into taking him out for a ride. He came home and said, "This horse is going to kill you" and never got on him again. He's not a nasty horse at all

though, just extremely forward.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? 50's are fun. 100's intimidate me but are the most satisfying. I love the last 10 miles or so of a 100 when you're pretty sure you're going to finish and you can just take your time and enjoy the night. I've never done a multi-day.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I use homemade electrolytes. 2 parts Salt. 2 parts Lite-Salt, 1 part crushed Tums. He gets one 35 mm film canister the night before the race, the morning of and if going hard on a hot day once an hour. He'll always get at least about 1 dose every 10 to 15 miles. I mix it with yogurt or applesauce and if his gut sounds are slow I'll add a tad of probiotics.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? I don't believe in putting too much stuff in their food to make it unappetizing. I feed a basic 10% protein 6% fat sweet feed and all the Tifton 44 Coastal Bermuda hay he'll eat. At a ride he'll get that plus some beet pulp & Alfalfa.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? No.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? None.

Do you give any kind of joint products? I put him on Adequan for a while when he was having some mild lameness problems, but it made no difference. This year I had digital x-rays taken and his joints were very healthy. The vet was amazed he had as many miles as he had and said he didn't think Adequan was called for.

How far do you usually travel to rides? I live near Chattanooga, TN, which is very centrally located in the SE. I can go to more rides than I can afford without traveling over 7 hours one way. 5 hours is the usual. The farthest we've gone was to the Pan Ams in Vermont.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? No. Like I said, I'm in the dead center of my region.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why? Melissa Crain because she competes at the highest levels without ever seeming to overstress her horses. She somehow stays practically "serene" and is always complimentary of her horses--never criticizing them. Joe Edwards, who is a heavyweight who rode one small horse, Marco over 4000 miles completing Old Dominion, Tevis and the ROC--always as a team. When Marco got less competitive, Joe just got less competitive with him and continued to enjoy their partnership. Joe Schoech because he's so "good." He's just a person who, though he has a good horse and a good chance on any given day is always the one who is willing to stop and help someone.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. When I was training for

my first endurance ride I got a new boarder at my barn, Lynda Corry. She had just bought a 4 year old green Arab named Baskhari and I talked her into taking him to do the ride, so she and I did our first ride together. Lynda and Baskhari had competed for 16 straight seasons through 2002. The only reason Baskhari didn't have a ride this year was that she has been out of the country. They have over 4000 miles and competed in the North American Championships and were alternates for the World in Kansas. When we were getting started I photocopied every article about endurance in the entire Equus collection. She found several articles by Kerry Ridgeway and lived by them religiously. We ended up with this big stack of photocopies and every time we recruited somebody new we'd make them a complete set. We started out with me sort of as her mentor. Then I dropped back to have children and she went ahead and competed at upper levels and did lots of 100's. She was already starting to back off when Kaboot started coming into his own. She drove from Texas to Mississippi to be my mentor. She paced me through my first 100 and that meant a lot to me. After that ride she sent me a card with a cowboy riding across the sky on a star. It said, "It's your turn to shine." I've learned that "who's on top" any given year is sort of like riding a see-saw. When one's star is on the way up the other may be on their way down, but what comes around goes around and both directions, up or down can be enjoyable if you have the right attitudes. Through the years even though we've lived in different parts of the country and now world we've continued to encourage each other.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? Good feet, a good back, a long stride. Kaboot's a power trotter. Sometimes I think I might go more for one with the "float" next, but I wouldn't complain at all if I found another Kaboot. I still like them small and handy, and I won't ride a horse that doesn't enjoy the sport as much as I do. I want to like the horse personally. I had one horse that I think could have been a really good one but he just didn't seem to like anybody. I decided to sell him before finding out if he was any good because I didn't want to find out he was and get stuck competing on him.