

Beth Wachenheim & Zarkuria H.C.C.



AERC Decade Team



First AERC ride: 1992 Region: PS

Tell us about your horse When/how did you come to get him/her? I bought her from Julie Suhr when she was 10. Ria threw Julie after spooking at a deer, broke her arm, and then kicked her, apparently. The first time I rode her, she was in someone else's custody. This woman didn't want Ria to be sold & tried her best to thwart things. Additionally, I hated Ria when I met her.. She wouldn't move away from her buddies and go forward. I was about to give up, after driving two hours to get there, when along came Becky Glaser riding one of her horses. She offered to "take" me on a trail ride. Ria and I were able to move on down the trail after her fortuitous offer.

I still wasn't convinced that Ria and I could work together when I talked to Julie that night. After listening more, I told her that I never made big decisions (like buying horses) when Mercury is retrograde, which it was. So she figured I was totally crazy and called Joanne Dietz who also knows something about astrology. Joanne confirmed that when Mercury is retrograde is NOT the best time to make a big purchase. Julie wanted to know when Mercury would go direct. I said there were two weeks to go between now and then, I considered buying Ria carefully. Then Julie made the nice offer for me to ride her on the Western States 50 with Barbara White. She and Bob would crew. With that great offer and the good experience we had on that ride, we did sign the papers when Mercury was direct.

What is your horse's breeding?

She's an HCC horse (Hyannis Cattle Co.) sired by Sukuris out of HCC Zaroga.

Sex: Mare

DOB: 5/8/84

Horse height: 14.3
Approx. Weight: 900 lbs
Color: dark bay
Shoe size: O
Easyboot size: O

Why did you decide to purchase this horse (or if you didn't purchase, why did you choose to use this horse in endurance)?

She's built for it, had been started slowly, and had had some ride experience already suggesting that in a couple of months, she might be able to do the Bryce XP, for which we'd been preparing Scott's horse.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse?

Yes, probably over 1,000 miles worth.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport?

Six or seven

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities?

I started with halter classes, English Pleasure, and moved into dressage & combined training. We did a few NATRC rides and I went on several (fake) foxhunts. Our first endurance horses were horses we raised and our daughters rode them in Pony Club.

How many years have you been involved with horses? About 33. In endurance? 22 years

What got you interested in endurance riding?

We could see that our horses were good at long distance trail riding and Pony Club people exclaimed over their low P&Rs.

What was it that kept you interested?

The pretty places we could go and the interesting people we met. I liked the challenge. Also it was so relaxing compared to the show ring, the dressage events, (Both requiring geometry and good grooming skills) and NATRC, which seemed to me, at that time, to have nonsensical rules, about what constitutes "best horse care."

How old was your horse when first started? First ride?

Started at 5 and probable first ride one (25) at 6.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons?

I didn't own her the first 3 years. Before I owned her, she did a 25 with a trainer in 91. at age 7. In 92 she totaled 125 miles. In 93 she did 280 miles. In 94, I did 500 miles on her. So she was 10 before she had many competitions.

What mileage distance did you start with?

She started with 25 and occasionally I've gone back to 25 or 30s. (which haven't counted as part of her

6045 mile total to date.)

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'?

Only a few times did I let her loose within a mile of a ride finish. The first time was in 95 when she was 11, but usually our ride placing was just how it happened to go. We top tenned about 12 times and tied for 1st once. I just don't think speed is conducive to longevity in most cases.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons?

We ride throughout the year but much less in winter.

If you have done 100's, how much time off do you give after doing one?

About 1-2 weeks of rest.

What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride?

Two to three rides/week. 15 miles at most, but usually closer to 9. Lots of hill work. (We don't over condition.)

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one?

7 to 10 days of rest after a 5 day completion.

What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride?

3 rides/week, two days the week before the ride.

What kind of tack do you use?

Stubben or Albion dressage saddle or Albion all purpose, Supracore pads, team string girth or Professional Choice girth stretch neoprene. Headgear ranges from Team Lindell, Team bit, simple snaffle, or tom thumb. Usually no breast plate.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots?

Sometimes pads or easy boots. Normal shoes, event style.

What kind of problems have you encountered?

Herd boundness, sometimes I've worried she wouldn't eat when her buddy dropped out. Head bouncing on the bit when she wants to move out. Bucking.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had?

Uveitis. She had several bouts of it (probably) and hasn't had any in the last 5 to 6 years.

How did you work through it?

Keep fly screen on. Didn't expose her to wind in the trailer. Wormed less and only with Zimecterin. Used the meds as needed. One XP she wore racing blinders to shut out the light intensity. Very individual disease -- cut down on alfalfa

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse.

Probably this was the first multiday I'd done on her. She was comfortable with her partner horse, Pavo, but not that attached. The scenery was exquisite on the Bryce XP and we didn't make the wrong turn everyone else did.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse.

When Scott pulled and she did her raging stallion act the rest of the ride.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important?

Dressage, or similar disciplined ring riding, IS conditioning (mentally and physically) AND helps to develop the correct posture and musculature of both horse and rider. We were lucky to have Sue Eoff work with us for several years. Yoga is rider ñ helpful, plus eating healthy organic foods. We use equine massagers & chiropractors regularly. Have stretched tight equine muscles ourselves before rides and we regularly see human body workers: Feldenkraus, massage, chiropractors, Bioscan, yoga are regular tools.

Where does your horse live?

Ria has a paddock at home sectioned off from her buddies most of the day. They also have hours of pasture turnout altogether daily most of the year. Seasonal grasses under the oaks. Stall confinement for really heavy rains and wind.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of it's life in?

There must be herds at Hyannis Cattle Co in Arizona, but I don't know..

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses?

STRENGTHS; Great legs, forward attitude, strong constitution. Estrus has never been a problem. Great P&Rs.

Weakness: eyes, maybe. Herdboundness. Although I ride her alone occasionally at home, if I start a ride with others, I better end with that group, or SOMEONE or else! She also is upset by horses met along the way, if they get itoo close to her girlfriend. Downhill walk could be better. Eating along the way and at vet checks could be better, some days.

What advice do you have for new riders?

Don't ride fast. If you do, expect to pay more for vet bills and more for bodywork. Also expect to be in the market for a new horse every few years.

Looking back, what would you do differently? What do you feel you did right?

We had dressage lessons and did obstacle courses. We never pushed too hard in speed or distance. Hills are great conditioners! Fed 4 times/day when under heavy ride schedule.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it?

The chance to do multidays & the Tevis. I never expected that she would do over 6,000 competitive miles and still be going strong. In fact no one believes her age (19). I thought older horses went calmer & easier. Indirect goals were to maintain a healthy, still useful horse enjoying things. Achieved!

Describe your horse's personality. How is it like or unlike yours?

She's a bit standoffish with humans, like me. Loves other horses. Can be very dramatic, but has a strong work ethic, like me.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? Multidays.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. We use Ride Rite electrolytes, from ABC in syringe with Probiotics, a total of about 5 doses for a 50 mile ride, more for a 100. The night before the ride, the A.M. of the ride, twice during, (if drinking well) and after. We continue with added electrolytes for the next 5 days.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success?

We have used Forco, an enzyme product, for about 15 years. We feed fresh garlic daily, mostly as a bug repellent, but it is also a anti microbial and anti fungal. They're all fine with it. We don't overuse alfalfa. we aim for 1/3 alfalfa, 2/3 forage that is grown locally. Have used various ABC products off and on, especially pro bi , which we use before & during long trailer rides.

We use a mineral mixture, which is also used as a fertilizer -- both us & the horses. Apple cider vinegar. Occasional use of homeopathics amd Bach flower remedy.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem?

The as needed use of probiotics.

Something solved the evitis problem; wonder sometimes if it was the homeopathic phosphorus administered for about two weeks that balanced things out. Or it could have been the buckwheatÖ. Used briefly. Or the fact that we reduced alfalfa from 1/2 to 1/3 of total daily hay.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use?

See above

Have used many herbal teas on cold rainy days using a variety: comfrey, vervain, passionflower, and mullein, mint, red clover, oat straw, nettle. The way some people might make a bran mash but these teas are mineral rich & soothing.

Do you give any kind of joint products?

MSM daily. Used to use glucosamine & joint jolt

How far do you usually travel to rides?

3 hrs to 2 1/2 days

Do you go to many rides outside of your region?

yes

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why.

Julie Suhr for her endurance and she's a fine example of humanity. The same for Connie Berto. There are

at least 20 older women riders, vets, and ride managers in their 50s, approximately, who have been around “since the old days.” These are the people I admire the most. They are close to the earth & their animal companions. They are practical and great examples of what's good about humans. They don't seem to care about their nail polish, thank goodness. Not to disparage the men. They are just less clear, to me.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them.

Not exactly, but Karen Bottiani, and the people she grew with, were terrific. That includes a lot more women, in a slightly different category. This group is very fun loving and serious about horsekeeping details and health.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for?

A safe one with forward attitude.

Add any additional comments or stories that you can think of:

I think Rias' longevity is best illustrated by the fact that she completed a challenging 5 day ride at Bryce Canyon the first year that I owned her, and ten years later completed the tough Cold Springs 5 day ride.

Horse death or serious injury is so devastating that we all come out ahead in our sport if they can be avoided.