

**Julia Lynn-Elias, DVM & DS Trinity**



American Endurance Ride Conference

**2013 AERC Decade Team**



Year of First Endurance Ride (first year in the decade): **2003 (for “Trinity”), 1997 (for me)**

Region: **SW**

Current rider lifetime mileage? **14,830**

Endurance: **14,830**

Limited Distance: **305**

Current horse lifetime milage? **4,770**

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? **My first endurance horse was experiencing some lameness issues and I was looking for a “back-up” horse until he got “well”. I purchased “Trinity” as a “project” to hold me over until my endurance horse recovered. As it turned out, my endurance horse was unable to return to the sport and “Trinity” became my primary endurance horse.**

What is your horse’s breeding? **Arabian - I was told that he is a mixture of Crabbet, Egyptian, and Polish lines and that is why the breeder called him “Trinity” (for 3)**

Sex: **Gelding**

DOB: **4/25/1998**

Horse height: **15 hands**

Approximate weight: **900 lbs**

Color: **bay**

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? **He was young, cute, green broke, and cheap.**

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

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? **19**

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? **trail riding**

How many years have you been involved with endurance? **since 1997 - 17 years** With horses in general? **purchased my first horse in 1992**

What got you interested in endurance riding? **A fellow veterinary student told me about the sport while I was in vet school and it sounded like something I would love to do. When I moved to Arizona a few years later, I met someone that did endurance riding and she introduced me to the sport.**

What was it that kept you interested? **I love the relationship that develops between the rider and their endurance mount and love the trails!**

How old was your horse when first started in endurance? **“Trinity” did his first LD when he was four years old - but he was turning five a few days later**

How many rides did you do your first three ride seasons? **9 in the first year, 6 in the second year, and then he had a year off for a chronic “splint” issue**

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) **25, 30, then 35 for the first three rides**

How long until you top tenned or raced (if you did)? **“Trinity” received a top-ten on his first 100 mile ride in 2006 - but there were only 8 horses entered. His first top-ten in an endurance ride with greater than ten riders was in 2008.**

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? **In the SW we have a year-round ride season so there is no set “time-off” period. I have given “Trinity” a full year off early in his career when he developed a persistent “splint” that caused off and on lameness. I also generally have two or three horses “going” at any one time so I will intermittently rotate someone off for 2 - 3 month periods for rest and rehab.**

If you have done 100s, how much time off do you give after doing one? **Usually I let a horse rest for at least one day per 10 miles of competitive distance, so after a hundred I generally let them rest for a minimum of 10 days (usually 2 weeks). After doing Tevis, I let that horse rest for 2 months**

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one? **I use the same rule of thumb of 1 day per 10 miles of competition. So a horse that did 155 miles (3-day pioneer), I wouldn't ride for at least 2 1/2 weeks.**

Do you use any special type of tack or shoeing with your horse? **My horses are all barefoot now and I use the Easy Boot Glove or Glue-On for training and competition.**

What kind of problems have you overcome with your horse? **“Trinity” is not the most comfortable horse to ride and he is very forward most of the time (pulls on the bit for all 50 miles!), so some of the rides I have done on this horse have been very physically and mentally challenging. Although I love “Trinity” with all of my heart, I have always said that I had to keep riding him, because nobody in their right mind would ever buy him.**

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. **That is difficult. I think “firsts” are always memorable - first 50, first 100, first multi-day! Those rides really let you know that you have an exceptional partner and give you a sense of accomplishment that you have conditioned the horse successfully.**

What was your most humbling experience? **There have been SO MANY!!! Endurance riding can be very humbling. The longer you do it, the more times you learn how little you know! In 2006 I took "Trinity" to Fort Schellbourne in Nevada. On the first day, he got completely caught up in the "herd mentality" and did the entire 50 miles without taking a single drink out on the trail! The ride traversed trails that had numerous creeks and streams but no troughs. Every time we came to a creek and I presented "Trinity" to it to drink, another rider would either leave the stream or pass us on the trail. He would then refuse to drink and pull on me to go with the other horse. This happened probably 100 times that day. I could not get him to drink!!! So then, when we finished the ride, he managed to vet out but was dehydrated and exhausted from fighting with me all day trying to hold him back. He ended up on IV fluids that night and I stayed up all night watching him and praying that he would pull through. About half way through the night he started eating and drinking on his own and by the next morning he was back to being his annoying self.**

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? **It's more important to take care of your horse than to achieve recognition. For me, going slow and making sure my horse is metabolically safe and physically sound at the end, is winning.**

What advice would you give to new riders? **Take it slow. It's NOT a race. Develop a strong foundation of long, slow distance before you ever try to top-ten or win.**

Looking back, what do you feel you did right? **Going slow - especially on multi-day rides.**

What would you do differently? **There have been many times that I have completed a ride and wished I had ridden it "smarter" - usually when I allow myself to be dragged along by another rider going faster than I wanted to go.**

What was your highest goal for your horse, and did you achieve it? **Tevis. Not yet with "Trinity". Hopefully next year (2014). Also getting close to 5,000 miles on "Trinity" which would be monumental to me, especially considering he is not the "easiest" ride.**

Describe your horse's personality? **He is very mellow "on the ground" and can be a complete spaz on an endurance ride. He just wants to "GO"! This can be a challenge because I like to take it slow and easy. How is it like or unlike yours? Well, he wants to go fast and I want to take it slow!**

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most (50s, 100s, multadays, etc.)? **50's, 100's, multi-days! I like them all but not a big fan of Limited Distance. For me, 25 miles is a training ride.**

In what ways has endurance riding made a positive influence in your life? **It is my sanity! And fellow endurance riders are my family.**

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? **We believe in free choice quality hay with variety of different grasses and a small percent of alfalfa.**

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program (i.e., changed from one hay to another, added something special) that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? **free-choice grass whenever possible**

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? **At endurance rides (and a few days leading up to it) we will give beet pulp mashes with a low-starch pelleted feed and rice bran, probiotics, and electrolytes.**

Do you give any kind of joint products? **Polyglycan, Legend, or Adequan periodically (especially leading up to a 100).**

Describe your electrolyte protocol. **We use powdered electrolytes mixed in with their mash for at least a day prior to leaving for a ride, and twice a day while at the ride site, then supplement that with an electrolyte paste or home-made electrolyte/molasses mixture along the trail during the ride. How often we electrolyte on the trail depends on how hot it is - from as little as only at the vet-check to as often as every other hour.**

How do you choose which rides to attend? **We choose our rides based on proximity first and scenery second, although we will travel farther for a multi-day or 100 than we will for a single day 50.**

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? **Yes - we travel to the MT and PS region.**

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why. **Les Carr for the number of miles he has achieved on a single horse and the way he allows the horse to take care of itself along the trail; Karen Chaton for always looking for new ways to do it better and provide the best for her horses; and Dave Rabe for being brave enough to take someone else's "bronc" and put the miles on it to turn it into a successful multi-day horse.**

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. **Yes. When I moved to Arizona I met two veterinarians that were doing endurance rides and they taught me a lot about trail etiquette and conditioning. They got me started and then the rest I learned from the "school of hard rocks."**

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? **I like a horse with some size to it that is relatively mellow, smooth gaits, and good conformation. I am totally not into the "crazy" horse that wants to race down the trail; I want safe and level-headed.**