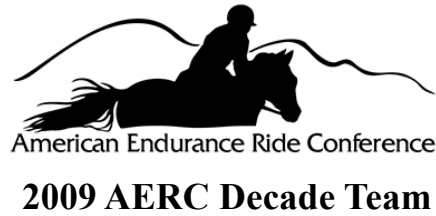


## Kayla Ramsdell & MM Memphis Gem



**Region:** West

**Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her?** Gemmy was at a farm that was getting out of breeding Arabians, and getting into breeding cats. We were there to see Qwest, who we ended up buying. My grandpa loved Qwest and I was partial to this FAT little chestnut in a different paddock. It turned out that he belonged to a boarder and was for sale, also. He only knew how to walk, trot, and canter in a round pen (read: did not turn or stop) but I was hooked. We ended up taking both horses home, and then returning a few years later for 2 more.

**What is your horses breeding?** He's Arabian- an Aladdin Grandson.

**Sex:** Gelding

**DOB:** April 15, 1991

**Horse height:** 14.3

**Approx. Weight:** 900 lbs

**Color:** Chestnut

**Shoe or hoof boot size:** 1

**Why did you decide to purchase this horse?** He wouldn't leave me alone! We were looking at Qwest at the same time and Gem just followed us around. He was cute and had this mischievous look on his face. It was pretty much love at first sight and I made my Grandpa buy him.

**Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse?** Yes I rode my Grandpa's horse

Khemo Khairo before I rode Gemmy. The first time I rode Khairo, Dave Rabe was my sponsor.

**How many different horses have you ridden in this sport?** Quite a few! Before Gem and Khairo, and also since getting them, I rode a few more of my grandparent's horses. I have also ridden a couple of Jim and April Mitchell's horses and Jackie Bumgardner's horse Ross. I love catch riding, but my favorite horse of all time is still Gem.

**Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities?** (if so, describe) Yes I also show dressage, jumpers, and three day eventing.

**How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance?** I have been involved with horses ever since I can remember, and I have been riding Endurance since I was 8 years old. My first ride was the American River Ride and I was just turning 8 I think.

**What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested?** My Grandpa and Grandma did it, and I was always begging to ride so it was a natural progression that they would just start taking me. I love Endurance riding. There is nothing I would rather do than spend all day on my horse and see the beautiful country that the rides take us through.

**How old was your horse when first started? First ride?** Gem was 9 when he went on his first ride, and it was the Redwood Ride 50. It became very evident that he needed to learn that they weren't always as easy as a one day 50 so his next ride was a 2 day 100, and after that a 3 day 150 and then 4 day 200.

**How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons?**(list w/ distances)

His first season we did 6 rides with 6 completions and a total of 300 miles. The next season we did 21 rides with 20 completions and a total of 1050 miles. Then his 3rd season we did 14 rides with 14 completions and 850 miles.

**What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.)** I started with one 25 then went to 50's. Gemmy started with 50's

**How long till you top tenned or 'raced'?** (if you did) I top tenned with Gem in his second season, but I rarely 'race'. I pick a speed that works for us and stick with it. If we end up in the front that's great, if we don't, that's good too. If he is feeling pretty good one day and I realized I'm in the front, then I will let him cruise and see if we can't keep it. Gem loves to just trot all day and pick people off one by one. He is very competitive and if I let him he would canter the whole way. Cantering is Gemmy's favorite gait and he is very balanced.

**How much time off do you give between ride seasons?** Gemmy is getting older, so he doesn't do very many rides anymore. He would get as much time as he needed in between rides and seasons. He tends to meet you at the gate if he wants to go, so if he was driving me insane, we would go do a ride!

**If you have done 100's, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride?** I did a few 100's with Gem. He usually got 2 weeks to just recover, and then I would take him out on long walks. In the month leading up I would do hill work because we live on a flat ranch, and I mostly prepared him with 50's. After a couple 50's he was fairly fit and just needed to be maintained.

**If you have done multidays, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride?** I really like multidays with Gem. He is so much fun! I really do not focus on the months leading to the rides, I just do long slow distance with some hills a little interval

training to get his heart rate up. During ride seasons he was kept fit enough going to rides and I would ride him in between to keep myself fit!

**What kind of tack do you use?** I have a Bob Marshall treeless Sportsaddle. I use biothane bridle, breastcollar and I have a crupper on my saddle but don't always need it. I use a equalizer pad under the saddle to minimize the flexing of the tree of the saddle. I have used many different bits because although Gem has dressage training, on rides he is VERY forward thinking and can be bull headed about rating and stopping. The best one I found was a myler combination bit. It had a snaffle ring and a curb ring, and the noseband has a hackmore action. I called it my triple threat! The curb and hackmore got him stopped, and the snaffle kept a good connection so he wouldn't drop his back and curl his neck to evade my aids.

**What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots?** He gets shod with natural balance shoes and I would use easyboots as well.

**What kind of problems have you encountered?** Gem has been incredible. His first season he got kicked and popped a splint so was out for about a month but we found he was blowing an abscess at the same time so that probably had a lot to do with it. He also had some desmitis in a hock at one point but besides that he has been a great horse with few issues.

**What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had?** The issue with his hock was the most severe injury, but his rehab went fine and I never had to give him time off.

**How did you work through it?** I walked 10 min for a week, then added 5 min a week for 2 weeks and then added 5 min of trot per week after that until we were at full work.

**Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse.** I have had many many many great rides on Gem, but one year at Death Valley he was just perfect. We cruised along and didn't get stuck in any big groups. He felt great and the weather was incredible. I couldn't stop smiling. Then another ride on the XP with Karen and Rocky our horses felt great and we were laughing all day. (describes most of XP, actually). I loved riding with my grandma and grandpa also. My whole endurance career has been filled with "best rides I've ever had".

**Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse?** There are a few days that come to mind- The day that he got away from me on XP and Karen had to chase him down. The Tevis that he NEVER walked- he jiggled the whole day and I thought I was going to die. He had done 900 miles of XP and then got 2 weeks off before Tevis to gain weight back and he was SO fit and had eaten a ton. I think he was the most fit he had ever been and he ran all over me the whole day. The day he injured his hock and I walked him in to camp and worried about him the entire time.

**What was your most humbling experience?** The day that he got away from me on XP and Karen had to chase him down.

**What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important?** My grandparents always taught me that my most important responsibility on the trail is my horse, and fast or slow, I needed to do what was best for my horse no matter who I wanted to ride with, or the pace I wanted him to go. They taught me to listen to my horse, and be a good enough rider to do what my horse needed.

**Where does your horse live? (pasture—# acres, dirt lot, paddock,etc.) Board? At home? Full turnout?** He lives at home in a dry lot during the day, and pipe stall at night.

**What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of his life?** I don't even know. I would assume he was in pasture for the first year or so, but then he was a stallion so he was separated

from the herd.

**What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses?** Gem is metabolically very strong, and he has a ton of stamina. He doesn't have the biggest trot but its big enough. He loves to canter and is very, very balanced. He is a great downhill horse, also. He will pee up to 10 times in a 50 mile ride, and always drinks really well. Anytime I hop off for a potty break, he will stretch out and pee with me. He also eats anything you put in front of him which is really nice.

**What advice do you have for new riders?** Make sure you have a good relationship with your horse. Even if you are at a loss on the trail, you at least want to know how your horse is doing. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and always be polite.

**Looking back, what would you do differently?** More rides!

**What do you feel you did right?** I always did right by my horse.

**What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it?** I wanted to complete the Tevis after XP, which I did, and top ten some rides, which I did. I also wanted to complete multadays, and we did that too!

**Describe your horses personality? How is it like or unlike yours?** He is so mischievous and arrogant! He always has this little grin on his face that makes you wonder what he is up to. He has a very strong personality and I am convinced that he still isn't "trained" but we just reached an understanding. He is pushy and strong and has no concept of personal space.

**What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most?** I love multadays.

**Describe your electrolyte protocol.** He gets electrolytes the night before a ride and after he drinks while on the ride.

**Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success?** No, not particularly.

**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?** Gem gets Elk Grove Milling's stable mix which contains vitamins and minerals. I think giving a good vitamin mineral supplement is important to any horse, especially endurance horses. I like Northwest Supplement, also.

**Do you give any kind of joint products?** (describe) I use Pentosan and Cosequin ASU.

**How far do you usually travel to rides?** It depends. We have traveled to St. Joseph to start XP, but generally stuck to the rides within a day or two drive. We also did rides in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, etc but only if it was a particular ride we wanted to do or it was on the way to another destination.

**Do you go to many rides outside of your region?** Sometimes.

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



*Kayla on Gem (right), Karen on Chief (left) at Death Valley Encounter. Photo © Steve Bradley.*

My grandma and grandpa because they taught me the value of setting goals and how to never give up. They drove me all over to rides and taught me most of what I know. Karen Chaton because she never stops smiling and neither do I. She also taught me about “racing”- meaning how to ride smarter instead of faster. Dave Rabe because he is a hosebag and is the first person I rode with who wasn’t my grandparents. He loves his horses and likes the tough rides, and so do I

**Did you have a mentor or first trail partner?** Tell us about him/her/them. I rode with my grandma and grandpa from the time I was 8 and they taught me everything. They don’t ride very much anymore but they still love the sport and tell stories about it. They like to keep track of riders from home, and always watch the Tevis checkpoints online. They started riding to find a sport they can do together, and I can’t wait to get my husband a horse and teach him the ropes of the sport.

**In choosing your next horse, what would you look for?** My next horse is going to have to find me. I have a warmblood and a thoroughbred to event right now, and although I know I want a big boned, big trotting arab who will take care of my husband, I still love Gem and can’t imagine any horse ever taking his spot. Hopefully he still has a few miles in him, yet and I won’t have to worry about a “next” endurance horse for a while.