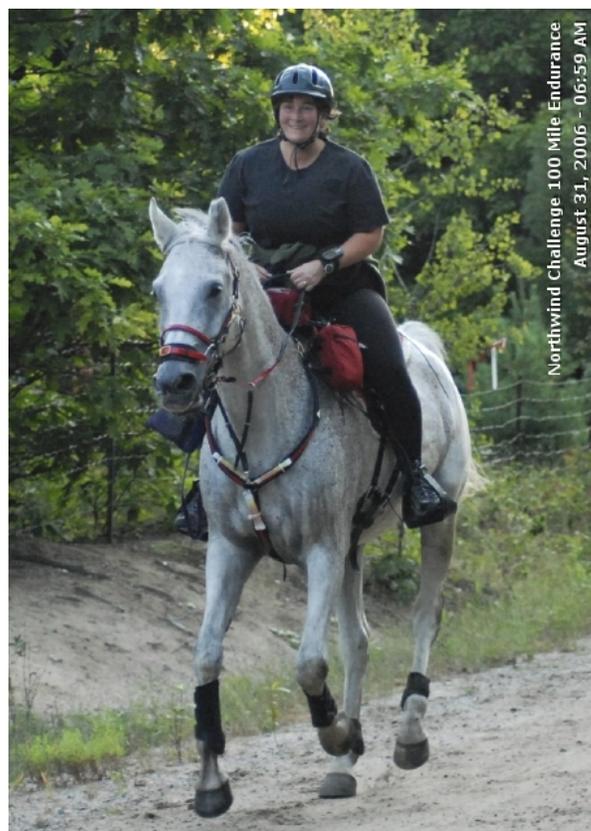


Patti Stedman & Breezewood Nevarre



American Endurance Ride Conference

2010 AERC Decade Team



Rider Name: Patti Stedman

Horse Name: Breezewood Nevarre (“Ned” - “Nedly” - “The Nedhead” - “Nedly Do-Right”)

Region: Northeast

Current Rider Lifetime Mileage?

Endurance: 2485

Limited Distance: 215

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her?

When it appeared that my husband was serious about this ‘endurance thing’, I sold my draft cross dressage mare and started looking for a horse that could be my dressage horse but could also keep up with my husband on condition rides. After searching nationwide for the right Arabian/Warmblood cross, through my friend Kathy Calanni (may she RIP) I found Ned an hour from home, a long 4 year old Arabian/Trakehner gelding, with the magical “30 days of training.”

What is your horse's breeding? Out of an Egyptian Arabian mare shown in halter who was never started under saddle (14.3H) and by a local Trakehner stallion who did it all, a true athlete (15.2H)

Sex: Gelding

DOB: 6/6/1994

Horse height: 16.1 or so (but he was only 15.2ish when I bought him, the bastard)

Approx. Weight: 1125# fighting weight (thanks, SERA)

Color: Gray

Shoe size: 2

Or, hoof boot size: (Also a 2)

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? Despite the fact that he bit his young owner when I went to see him, and he appeared to have a lot of attitude, he was also a lovely mover and had a ton of personality. Boy, does he have personality!

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? I did some CTR with my draft cross mare, but no, Ned was my baptism by fire in to endurance.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? Around six, including stealing my husband's horses from time to time.



Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? I came to endurance from dressage, although I was always a bit of a misfit Dressage Queen, not liking white breeches or test-riding very much and finding the whole competitive aspect of it to be somewhat self-flagellating.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? Started riding lessons when I was seven, shortly after my Mom died. I think my Dad was hoping it would give me a happy focus. It gave me a total obsession!

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? This was my husband's idea. He was new to horses but read about endurance in Equus, so bought an unstarted 3 year old Arabian stallion (he'd never ridden) just before I met him in 1994. I met Richard at the barn where I

taught lessons shortly after his brilliant purchase. (And yes, we still have that horse. He got gelded and was my husband's first endurance horse.)

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? Started under saddle at four. First CTR at five; first 50 when he was seven, just one week after his first recognized dressage show. He was a very naughty youngster and without a great sense of self-preservation (bolting, jumping off trails, hyper-reactive spooking) so I took my time with him.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? (list w/ distances) Season One: one 50; Season Two: four 50s; Season Three: four 50s

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) Started with ECTRA CTR (one day rides 25-30 miles), then right up to his first 50 at Elk Valley (PA) which was a wonderful (and challenging!) ride.

How long till you top tenned or raced? (if you did) hahahaha We've accidentally Top Tennaed a half dozen or times but Ned does not really race.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? A healthy three plus months. We call it "winter" in the lake effect ski country of WNY.

If you have done 100s, how much time off do you give after doing one? Typically about a month, although I did a dressage clinic with Henk VanBergen 10 days after the Biltmore 100. Too good an opportunity to pass up. Ned did great although he felt submission was optional and was not inclined to let me drive the bus. Henk found that amusing and very understandable given his typical day job. But after a little mud wrestling we did some pretty nice dancing. Ned is a hell of a dancer!

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one? Not a lot of multi-days in the NE and Ned has an attitude that one must tread lightly upon. He likes his rest and days off.

What kind of tack do you use? (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.) I have two saddles for Ned – an Arabian Saddle Company Solstice (Mattes sheepskin half pad plus thinline) and a BM sports saddle (Skito)

Typically mohair string girths, although I occasionally use a waffle type (Wintec) when he's got a long coat. Little S hackamore for trails; KK Ultra snaffle for dressage schooling

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Barefoot? Barefoot and booted? Boring ol' eventers, sometimes with Vettec pour in pads, sometimes with plain ol' pads

What kind of problems have you encountered? Ned grows foot glacially slow (although he stays balanced) so timing of shoeing, especially with 100s has been sketchy.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? My husband's horse bit off the top of Ned's ear in a feed pan dispute about five years ago. It's okay, he has really big ears and we've thought maybe trimming the other down to match might be a good idea. Ned also got a melanoma on, of all things (because he is known far and wide by the vets for airing it out even during trot outs), his penis. Seems funny but he had a bad biopsy showing fast-growing cells after removal and I was scared to death. I think Ned beat cancer based on sheer force of personality. Not so much as a pimple since.

How did you work through it? Red wine and prayer.

What was the worst or most severe injury you have ever had relating to horses or endurance riding? When I had Ned for about a month, I had a very severe fall when he bolted, then reared when I

used a pulley rein on him. A nasty concussion, fractured pelvic rim, but most critically, it gave me fear.

How did you work through it? I got back on. Ned is the most athletic and powerful horse I've ever ridden and he can be naughty when he gets caught up in the joie de vivre. I've been dumped from Ned more times than I've come off in my life, sum total, on ALL of the other horses I've ever ridden, and I have ridden a lot of green and problem horses over the years. Last summer, he tossed me with great ease, at the age of 17, on back to back days on the same spot on our trail. (I think the second time was just to see if he could.) I am not terribly anthropomorphic, but Ned is smart, and Ned can be kind of a punk, and Ned is all about Ned. He is a remarkable, remarkable horse. If a horse can have a sense of humor (and this horse has made me a believer in that) Ned has a devilishly trickster side.

Which is why I kept on despite the fear, despite repeatedly coming off, despite my husband threatening to sell him out from under me before I got seriously hurt. (Again.) There were times I'd be lying on the ground, testing my parts to see if they worked, and I would just be open-mouthed and in awe of his victory passage as he circled me. (Oh and he never left me. Ever. He wanted me to climb back on so he could go for Round 2.)

I found that I could just never give him an inch, I had to ride him at all times, and that if he sensed I was in autopilot, he was going to find some amusing (to him) way to get my attention.

Every spring, even though he is now a senior citizen, I am just a little bit afraid to swing a leg over him. But I do. He has taught me so very much.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. Every single 100. They are magical. And perhaps the Vermont 100, which Ned finished the first time at 5 a.m. and the second time at midnight, the best of the best.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? Probably lying in the hospital after that first bad fall, with my ring finger swollen and turning brown because my engagement ring got crushed in the buckle of my reins, telling the nurses I'd most recently menstruated in 1942.

Or when I got the melanoma lab report from his tumor. That was pretty bad too.

What was your most humbling experience? So many of the falls. There was a period of time that Ned tossed every single person who had ever ridden him for more than 15 minutes, including a FEI dressage trainer friend. (That one at least made me feel better.) Now there are at least two riders he has not tossed; I think he's just waiting for the right moment.

Actually, on a more sentimental note, Ned carried my dear friend Rachel to her first 100 mile completion (and Ned's seventh) a couple of summers ago. The ease with which he completed, the gleam in his eye, his loose-legged stride throughout, watching him for that 100 miles (from my younger gelding, who was completing his first 100), well, that was pretty humbling too.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? They are all different. Every damned one of them is their own jigsaw puzzle of complexity and Ned came in to my life, I am convinced, to make me break all of my own foolishly-held views of horses and horse training. With Ned, I learned all about "whatever works." I cannot tell you the number of "I will never ... " that Ned has forced me to change.

Where does your horse live? In/out of a box stall (with the door never closed) with paddock access 24/7 with the rest of our herd of four and pasture access when Mother Nature allows.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life in? (pasture, w/ a herd, etc.) In/out pasture with a small herd, if I recall



What are your horse's strengths? He takes exquisite care of himself. He will slow down when he needs to slow down; he has never been near “the edge” and wouldn't know it if he saw it, from a great, great distance. He eats, he drinks, he pees, he poops. He may slow down, but he does not quit. He has a ton of bone. He's stoic and I can typically count on him to save my ham just at the moment I'm worried he'll fall apart. He is a big moving, loose-limbed creature and he can climb hills all day long. He also has a canter to die for. His dressage schooling makes him accustomed to carrying himself in a well-balanced way.

Weaknesses? He has a topline from hell, with a hunter's bump. He hates downhill, always has. He's thermo-regulatory challenged and is too big to do well in the heat, but he also hates to be cold or get rained on. He doesn't much like trailering although he trailers well. I space out rides largely because he gets pouty about getting on the trailer. He has an ego the size of a small city. Did I mention he can dump me quite adeptly?

What advice do you have for new riders? Make haste slowly. Listen to your horse. Think of him as a jigsaw puzzle and work out the pieces. Listen to what everyone has to say and keep those ideas in your toolbox, but don't use ALL of them. Speed kills.

Looking back, what would you do differently? I'd have worn a helmet when riding a green horse. That was so stupid. I wear one every ride now. That concussion was horrible.

What do you feel you did right? I kept my sense of humor. I had to. I stuck with him. I'm not sure how many riders would have. My dressage instructor, a good friend who has ridden Ned in a few LD rides, is convinced that Ned needed the right match in his person – he could have ended up in a bad spot or ruined in so many ways. He has repaid me a hundred-fold and my favorite phrase about Ned is “he doesn't owe me a thing.” I still love watching him go down the trail, and when I am on him I feel like I am home again.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? I wanted to do a 100 with him. He's done seven of them.

Now I want to ride him until he's not having fun anymore. He's 18 this year and he might have another 100 in him if it's the perfect ride, perfect weather, and if he's still being a punk. (We know all is well with Ned when he tries to get his head between his knees and leap!) I want to retire him before he has to be

retired and I want him to enjoy a life of sound and healthful leisure; he's earned it. But I don't think that day is here just yet.

Describe your horse's personality. How is it like or unlike yours? Oh dear, I think I covered that. One thing I will say is that although he is naughty, he is NOT mean. More mischievous.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? (multidays, 100's, 50's, etc.) 100s!

In what ways has endurance riding made a positive influence in your life? It has allowed me to become a better horsewoman; it's given me the opportunity to come to know my horses ridiculously well. And boy, have I met some wonderfully quirky and dedicated people!

Describe your electrolyte protocol. PerformNWins in slushies at the holds; Lyte Nows roughly every hour on trail.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? Whatever works! We're blessed with a hay farmer locally who gets us terrific stuff. He is 80-something and is not allowed to stop farming, or heaven forbid, die.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program) that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? We keep it pretty simple.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Ned gets Vitamin E/Selenium (our area is deficient), extra Vitamin E, a joint supplement, and Omega3s

Do you give any kind of joint products? Smart Pak has a joint supplement that we feed daily. Adequan series as we leg the horses up in the spring and/or before big rides.

How far do you usually travel to rides? Nothing is closer than four to five hours now. Typically anywhere from five to twelve hours away.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? Yes, SE and MW.

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

Julie Suhr– what a classy lady, and so humble, and she actually sent me the kindest note when we were preparing for our first100 and I was writing a series of articles for Endurance News

Mary Coleman– tells it like she sees it and may be the funniest human being alive. And she told me, long ago, that Ned was a 100 mile horse.

My friend– Gene Limlaw, is the epitome of a horseman. He rides beautifully, handles his horses with such ease, competes at the highest levels and yet never seems to take himself too seriously. That is something to be admired.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. My husband, Richard. The best riding partner, bar none. We can ride along companionably for miles without speaking and just enjoy one another. We have the ideal division of labor: He takes care of "stuff" -- I take care of living/breathing entities. It works for us and he is simply the best.

Describe the first rig you had and then tell us how it compares to your current rig? Tent + borrowed two horse tagalong.

Now we have a very well used LQ three horse trailer with the best mattress we could afford. And a shower. What more could a girl want?

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? Excellent conformation with good bone and feet. Strong topline. Easy movement. Trainability. Unrelenting desire to eat. Personality plus. I love a special needs child.