

Shannon L. Loomis, DVM & Quest For Star



American Endurance Ride Conference

2015 AERC Decade Team



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Rider's name: Shannon Loomis

Horse's name: Quest For Star "Quest"

Year of First Endurance Ride (first year in the decade): 2006

Region: NE

Current rider lifetime mileage? I actually have more miles than listed by AERC, but I was not a member and they are lost from memory... I also have a lot of CTR miles.

Endurance: 4215

Limited Distance: 1155

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? I bought him at 4 months old, looking for an eventual replacement for my last decade horse, Quail Meadow Star

What is your horse's breeding? Morgan, lots of Government breeding

Sex: Gelding

DOB: 2/1999

Horse height: 16.1

Approximate weight: 920#

Color: bay/seal brown

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? Met his owner at a Morgan Sport horse show. He was only a couple months old when I went to see him the first time and I liked the look of his relatives.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes, I competed for 15 years on my first Morgan before I bought Quest

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? Mostly just Star and Quest, but I have briefly ridden 3 or 4 others and I have a greenie that I have started this year.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Quest used to do a lot of eventing – he was up to Training Level - and he is broke to drive. Eventing has gotten so expensive, I haven't done any for the last few years. My last horse, Star, was a Sport Horse winner, which means he had Morgan Medallions in 5 different disciplines. I also do one or two Competitive Trail Rides a year.

How many years have you been involved with endurance? With horses in general? I started distance riding in 1985 when I was 12. I did my first one-day 50 in 1990 or so.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? I was in a 4-H club that concentrated on distance riding, we put on a club ride every year and always sent a contingent to the state CTR. I was attracted to distance because my horse was not a fan of showing. I enjoyed CTR but was very attracted to the more relaxed atmosphere of Endurance, where I could ride my own pace and not be caught up in all the nitpicking rules of CTR.

How old was your horse when first started in endurance? 5 for LDs

How many rides did you do your first three ride seasons? I did 2 LDs and 2 Novice rides his 5 year old year, 4 one day 25s and the LD S2S as a 6 yr old, and 3 one day LDs, S2S LD, and 2 50s as a 7 yr old.

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) 13 mile Novice ride first, then 25s

How long until you top tenned or raced (if you did)? 2008, his 5th season. We BCd 4 out of 7 rides and top tenned in all of them.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? Several months. The average is off from November to April but many years it is even longer.

If you have done 100s, how much time off do you give after doing one? Depends. The shortest was 2 weeks, but it was a very relaxed ride coming back. The longest was 5 months (last ride of the season). In general, I like to give 4 weeks off.

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one? We do Shore to Shore every year and usually give 3 weeks off, though I have done an easy 25 CTR after 10 days.

Do you use any special type of tack or shoeing with your horse? I always use pour in pads and set the shoe back to rock the toe. I use small trailers on his hinds to decrease interference.

What kind of problems have you overcome with your horse? Ulcers were a huge problem for him. It took many years to finally dial in exactly how to manage him for optimal performance and recoveries.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. Biltmore 100. It was our first ride of the season and our first 100. Our ride partner was pulled and we turtled but it was awesome standing under the lights at the finish.

What was your most humbling experience? Getting pulled on a 15 mile Novice ride because we were

fighting the whole time. And because, unbeknownst to me, he was full of ulcers.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Perseverance. Don't give up until you have exhausted all the reasons for the problem.

What advice would you give to new riders? Ask for help. Not in the middle of a race, but standing in line for vet in or in the evening before the awards meeting or while the vets are sitting around shooting the bull waiting for riders. And listen to what they say. I had a pleasure day rider come up and start asking questions in camp during a ride. The vets looked at her horse and her back was so painful the horse was miserable. We loaned her a saddle to ride in and it was a completely different horse. Be willing to ask. They can say no, or not right now, or direct you to someone to ask.

Looking back, what do you feel you did right? I asked.

What would you do differently? I would ask sooner.

What was your highest goal for your horse, and did you achieve it? We did BC's, we did OD, we did S2S (many times) and I'm glad we did decade. I wish he had been able to compete longer just because he can chew up a trail.

Describe your horse's personality. How is it like or unlike yours? He can be very hard headed, which I guess is like me. Early on, he would have tantrums out on trail, fortunately, he pretty much matured out of that, but I had to learn how to finesse him.

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

In what ways has endurance riding made a positive influence in your life? It has taught me perseverance. It has made me very observant and aware of how little things can be manipulated and managed to help the horse.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? Calcium! High fat, low starch. Equiotic probiotics.

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? Adding a high quality alfalfa hay and changing to a high fat feed made a big difference.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Just E/Se/Mag supplement

Do you give any kind of joint products? Adequan

Describe your electrolyte protocol. Perform N Win seems to be the only one his gut will tolerate. I combine with baby food, calcium, BCAA, and Equiotic. I give a dose the night before a ride, the morning of, all holds, and between holds if the loop is longer than 15 miles.

How do you choose which rides to attend? Schedule and location.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? I go to both SE and MW rides. I generally travel west so I don't have to go over the mountains.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why. Mollie Krumlaw-Smith for her dedication and stubbornness. Maureen Fehrs, DVM for her unceasing willingness to educate riders. My daughter, Morgan (yes, she was named after the horse!) for her level head on the trail and her dedication to the mantra "To finish is to win."

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. Cindy McDonald was my 4-H advisor and the person I blame, I mean credit, for starting me in distance riding when I was an impressionable youth.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? I have her already, a little Morgan mare(!) given to me, along with her sister, because her breeder didn't feel comfortable breaking horses any more.

She is a solid and steady little horse who absolutely loves moving down the trail. And honestly, that is my main qualification-they must move down the trail. Anything else I can live with. I sold a couple horses who just did not have the spark on trail that I want.