

Stagg Newman & Ramegwa Drubin



AERC Decade Team



4150 Miles, 47 ride completions
First AERC ride: 1988 Region: SE

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? I had been using a TB mare in CTR and endurance that I now know was not exactly designed to be an endurance horse. As she got into her late teens and developed soundness problems I started looking for a real endurance prospect.

I purchased Ramegwa Drubin (aka “The Pony” - he is only 14h2) from Maggy Price as an unbroken 4 year old, who after being field bred and gelded as a 3 year old, was running a herd of young mares. Maggie (HOF rider, breeder and AERC past president) said he was going to be good endurance horse but needed a strong rider. Now that I know Maggy well that meant he's going to be a handful and I'll be glad when he's your handful. And of course she was right about his being a good endurance horse.

Interestingly I was actually trying to buy Maggy's mare Annie, who was already started under saddle but Maggy talked me into buying Drubin by offering to let me ride her mare Kaffy in rides while I was training Drubin. Turned out that was a great deal as I did those early rides with Maggy and benefited tremendously from her mentoring.

What is your horse's breeding? Arabian - Crabbet and Polish

Sex: Gelding

DOB: June 13, 1983

Horse height: 14h 1

Approx. Weight: 875

Color: Grey (and usually with a mud covering)

Shoe size: 1

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

-Way of going - big, bold beautiful mover
-Attitude + Attitude + Attitude.
-Strong compact powerful confirmation.
-Way he was raised, running over 140 acres of rugged terrain with other horses. Maggie claimed when he wanted water in the winter he had to break the ice in the creek. She said her horses were survivors who knew how to take care of themselves. And she was right. Drubin drinks and eats very well on trail and handles the stress of trailering well.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes. 6 years of CTR and 5 50 milers with a TB mare.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? 7.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Competitive Trail Riding. Drubin for example has done the Western Carolina 3-day 100 12 times and several other 3 day 100s. He has done over 50 100-mile competitions including 1-day AERC 100s (33), and 2-day AERC 100s and 3-day CTRs. He is the Eastern Competitive Trail Riding Association lifetime high mileage horse (endurance plus CTR) with over 6600 miles.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? Horses - 28 years; Endurance, 22 years.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? My wife. We got our first horse for her as she did dressage and eventing. I had been a long distance runner. Endurance combines the appeal of both. Then I got my wife interested in CTR and endurance so now we do many of our rides together. The family the rides together stays together.

What keeps me interested:

-the horses
-the challenge
-the people
-the incredible scenery

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? He was just over 4 when he was ridden for the first time. I got Drubin on my 39th birthday. He received 3 weeks of ground training by a Major Renom, an officer in the Argentinean Calvary. Then Major Renom said he was ready for riding and we were walking and trotting without incident. As mentioned above he had grown up tough and conditioned running in the rocky hills of eastern PA. He did his first 25 mile CTR about 3 months after that as 4 year old and was reserve champion. He did his first 50 as a 5 year old.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? Note that when available we used CTRs for training. Slow LDs could be used in the same way.

With Drubin:

4 year old - 1 25 CTR.

5 year old - several 1-day 25-30 CTRs, 1 AERC 50, WNC 3-day 100.

6 year old - Drubin was ECTRA high mileage horse that year with 875 miles of combined CTR and endurance. He did 3 3-day CTR 100s that year, many shorter CTRs, 1 AERC 50, and 2 AERC 1-day 100s getting 4th in Vermont and a 1st and BC in the Carolina 100.

7 year old ñ 3 AERC 1-day 100s, 2 3-day CTR 100s.

I would NOT bring another horse along that quickly. I was fortunate that Drubin was so sturdy and athletic. We now bring our horses along more slowly.

What mileage distance did you start with? 25 and 30 mile CTR. Then 50 mile endurance.

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'? Drubin top tenned his first endurance race, a 50. However, he had done several CTRs prior to that. We bring our new horses along slower nowadays, typically doing several slow 50s and then a slow 100. We may do a slow 25 or just do that distance in training. We like to do the WNC 3-day 100 with our horses when they are 5.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? Usually 3 to 4 months in the winter and a month or two in summer. Note that Drubin gets very little riding between competitions now. Rather we let him free run with his herd mates, whom he will not leave since he is head of the herd, in the mountains while we train the others. Frequently Drubin leads us up the mountain.

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? Drubin has completed 33 1-day 100s. In 1992 he started and completed 9 100s in one year as well as a 2-day 100 and a 75.

I would NOT ask that of another horse as now I hope I am older and wiser. Typically, now I give ours horses at least 4 weeks rest after a 100 depending on the difficulty of the ride and the maturity of the horse. Many of the rides in the East require more rest after the ride because of the terrain, rocky, muddy, sandy, etc. compared to rides I did in the West where the footing was much more friendly.

If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one? Have not done multi-days. Waiting to retire and then go for it.

What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? With Drubin he gets to free run with our other horses when we ride in the mountains a couple of times. I will do one or two training rides of 1 and Ω to two hours.

With our other horses, they typically get one equitation lesson of æ hour to 1 hour one day a week, and a 1 to 2 rides a week in the mountains. A typical training ride leading up to a major 100 may be two hours with two climbs of 1500 feet to 2000 feet each.

What kind of tack do you use?

Whatever works!

Typically English dressage saddles. We will try out several used saddles until we find one that really fits both the horse and ride.

Pads: either wool sheepskin or cloud nine pad;

girths: might be string girth, neoprene, or fleece with elastic on both ends; leathers: Wintec Webber stirrup leathers,

stirrups: Western style stirrups with lots of cushioning, bits: jointed or mullenmouth snaffle,

bridles and breastplates: biothane, typically from Go the Distance

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? For Drubin, either ordinary steel for soft terrain, and Equiflex. **Pads?** Only rarely (e.g. Virginia City 100). **Easyboots?** Carry one for emergency use.

What kind of problems have you encountered? Occasional rear end lameness that may have been brought on by the transport to the World Equestrian Games in 1994 when Drubin was banged around in the unloading or may have already started. Since then he has several years where we would have a couple of really good 100s (we did very few 50s) and then a problem. He would get plenty of Dr. Green, i.e. rest, as well as massage work, acupuncture, and equine osteopathy. With plenty of rest he then had very few problems during the late 90s and early 2000. Now as he turns 21 years old, I do have to be more careful. He did successfully complete a tough 60, cold rain, the most treacherous bogs I have ever ridden through, on February 14, 2004.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse? Virginia City 100, 1992. It was the 25th anniversary ride. We started at before dawn and shortly after sunrise about 10 miles into the ride caught up with Darla Westlake on Muffy and another horse and rider. Shortly after that we had over a dozen wild horses galloping down the trail in front of us. We rode together through 50 miles when unfortunately for Darla, Muffy was pulled with lameness. We then did the last 50 miles alone. Around 90 miles as the desert was getting beautiful in the fading light, we spotted a bright red wild horse on our right. He looked up, charged across the trail in front of us and whirled around. Behind him were 3 other horses, presumably his band of mares. Fortunately Drubin stayed focused on the trail and it's a fantastic memory.

Drubin won the ride and set a course record that I believe still stands for the over 35 years the Virginia City ride has been run. And the icing on the cake was he won BC.

I have many other fantastic memories. One to the best was on the Swanton Pacific 100 in 1991. My wife was riding her horse Strut in his (and her) first 100. At about 94 miles we reached the stretch of trail where the old flume line had been cut into the side of the hill, a trail about 4 feet wide with a 900 drop into the canyon below. Cheryl, Strut, Drubin and I did the stretch of trail at sunset with the sun sinking into the Pacific Ocean in the distance and a full moon coming up in the other quadrant. We were confident that Cheryl and Strut would together complete their first 100. An incredible endurance high!

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? Drubin developed a serious colic after a easy ride into the mountains behind our place on a rather warm day. We had gone more slowly than normal because some flatland horses and riders from Florida were with us. We came back and Drubin developed a severe colic. One rider observed he had been scouring but I will probably never know the cause. Our vet, Dr. Ann Stuart, came out, did a rectal, felt distended small intestines, and sent us to the University of Tennessee saying he may need colic surgery. Fortunately after being put on IV fluids he quickly was looking much better and no surgery was needed. He then proceeded to charm the staff with his attitude.

What was your most humbling experience? Being pulled at the first check point at the World Equestrian Games in Holland.

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

- Learn as much as you can from others; listen to riders; listen to vets and farriers; listen to your horse.
- Have patience and perseverance.
- When you get an incredibly talented horse, treasure and nurture him/her. They are rare and special.
- Be patient and bring most horses along slowly over many years so they can have long careers.
- Pace is all important, particularly in 100s. Start out slowly, usually well behind the leaders. I cannot remember any of Drubin's 13 wins in 100s where he was the early leader. On the other hand, I can remember a couple of pulls where I went too fast early.

Where does your horse live? For much of Drubin's career, he has been boarded. Generally with one or more acres to run around in. For the last few years, I have been lucky enough to keep him at our home, usually in a 10-acre rolling pasture with a run-in shed. Sometime the horses are in a smaller pasture with a run-in shed.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life? Very close to what a horse in the wild would do. Either 40 or 60 acres of pasture to run around in. First year he was in a large herd of mares, fillies and colts, and geldings. Next 2 years, he and another young stud colt were in a field with an older gelding. Then he was field bred, gelded, and turned out with the herd of young mares which he ran.

What are your horse's strengths?

- Athletism
- Strong compact build, the build of a 15h1 horse in terms of front and rear end on 14h1 legs.
- Excellent heart (as shown by sonogram).
- Attitude ñ he is self-confident and bold, he seems to love the sport, and he is tough!
- Takes care of himself, and incidentally the rider.

Weaknesses?

- Was not easy to rate in early part of career.
- Occasionally has had rear end lameness that has been hard to identify.

What advice do you have for new riders?

- Read all you can, starting with the AERC handbook and a couple of good texts such as Lew Hollanders, "Endurance -- From Beginning to Winning"
- Find a mentor(s) who believe success is measured by the number of years and successful completions.
- To quote Matthew Mackay-Smith, "never hurry, never tarry." Although tarrying if you want to smell the flowers is OK.
- Find a horse that really enjoys the sport.

Looking back, what would you do differently?

- Not race early 50s.
- Go slower in the early part of rides.

What do you feel you did right?

- many early miles of trotting, in training and CTRs.
- sought advices from many of the best people in the sport including Maggie Price, Dr. Jeannie Waldron, Dr. Kerry Ridgeway, and Dr. Matthew Mackay-Smith, John Crandell III, who has won the Old Dominion 4 times, and 3 time World Champion Becky Hart, from whom I learned how to bring a horse to another level.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? One was to win the National 100-mile Championship in 1992, which we did do. That year Drubin started and finished 9 1-day 100s with 7 1st, a 2nd, a 3rd, 5 BCs, 5 course records, and set the AERC record that still stands for points in one season in the 100 National Championship with 3825 points.

In 1993 I had a goal to help win a team gold at the North American Championship for the USA East Team. We did that and also received the individual bronze.

In 1994 I had a goal to help win a team gold at the World Championship. Drubin developed a hematoma during the transit to Holland and so I told the Chef D-Equipe I would ride as an individual. I was told the hematoma might hold and he would finish fine or it might open and he would be in no danger but would likely be lame. About 20 miles into the race, Drubin had moved into the lead. Then a couple miles beyond that, apparently the hematoma broke and he was off in the right hind and pulled at the first vet check. So we did not achieve that goal.

I had hoped for 15 consecutive years of one or more 100s. That string stopped last year at 14 consecutive years when I pulled at 80 miles in the Carolina 100 in November.

We just achieved another goal, 17 straight years of AERC completions.

Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours? -Assertive, confident, competitive. In some ways similar but Drubin has more self-confidence. My wife says Drubin has mellowed more than I have.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? 100 mile rides: 1 horse, 1 rider, 1 day, 100 miles!

Describe your electrolyte protocol. Approximately 4 TBs Enduramax with applesauce every 1-2 hours on a 100.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? Good grass if possible and if not good high quality hay and minimal grain.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Vitamin E and Selenium because of selenium deficient soil where we live.

Do you give any kind of joint products? Cosequin. Daily. Adequan periodically.

How far do you usually travel to rides? Anywhere from 40 minutes to 4-5 days.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? Drubin has done at least one 100 in every AERC region.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why? In addition to Maggie Price (see below)

Drs. Mathew Mackay Smith, Kerry Ridgeway, and Jeannie Waldron, veterinarians who have competed at the highest level, who have raised the standards of the sport, and who care deeply about the welfare of the horse.

Becky Hart, who becomes one with her horse.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Yes, Maggie Price, HOF rider, breeder, AERC Vice President and President, who led AERC to adopt 'fit to continue' as the finishing criteria.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? Compact athletic small Arab gelding.

