

# 2017 ApHC Trail Hall of Fame



## Vicki Evenson

Congratulations to Vicki Evenson of Brodhead, Wisconsin! Vicki has completed 50 or more ApHC approved or sponsored trail rides and has been inducted into the ApHC Trail Rider's Hall of Fame.



# out & about

## Vicki Evenson ApHC Trail Hall of Fame Inductee

I am one of your recent inductees into the ApHC Trail Hall of Fame. This has been a 14-year journey by my sister, Viane Staniszewski, and me. In the process two of my Appaloosas, Miss Peppy Jac and Shiners Jezebel, each accumulated more than 1000 miles on sanctioned ApHC rides and received their bronze medallions. Concurrently, Viane and I incorporated trail riding in all 50 states.

This year's awards banquet put on by ApHC was certainly a wonderful celebration for the club. This is one event when

members who participate in any venue with their Appaloosa come together.

After receiving my award that night, a woman came over and kindly complimented me. She stated that her daughter wondered why I got that award for trail. She said she informed her daughter that the award was not for the trail class but was for riding the "real" trails. I initially was amused by the comment. Later it gave me pause as I reflected on what it took to complete those 50 ApHC-sanctioned rides to qualify for the Trail Hall of Fame.

Watching trail classes, one sees the elegance of the participants and their horses. Those handlers are bedazzled in their gorgeous outfits and tack. The horses are always meticulously groomed, very collected and perform with quiet precision. I can only imagine the hours of practice it takes to achieve that level of performance.

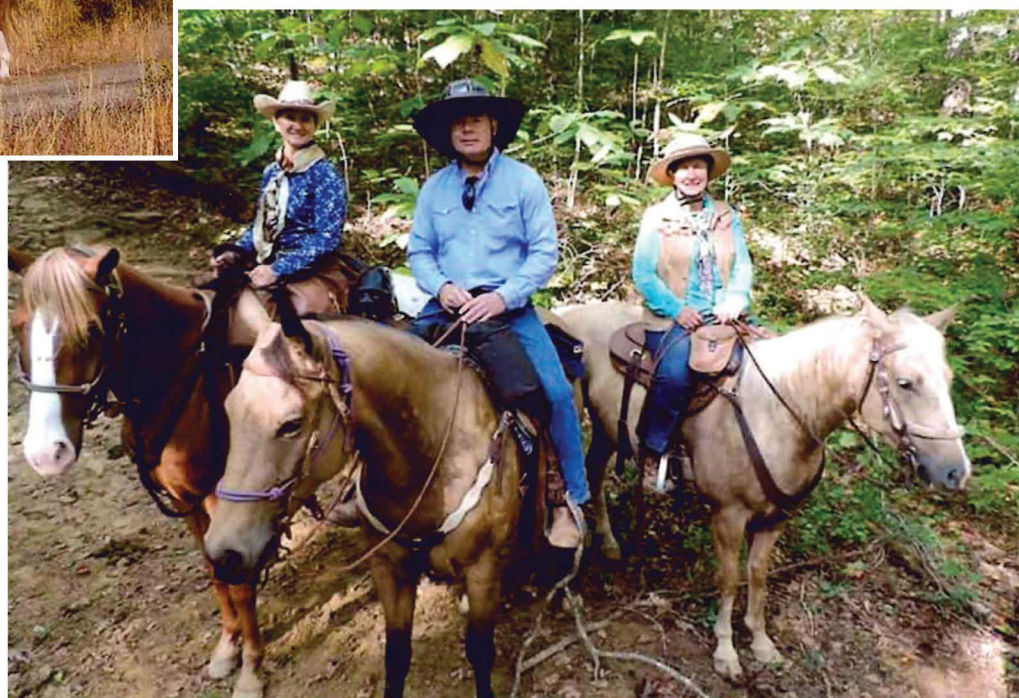
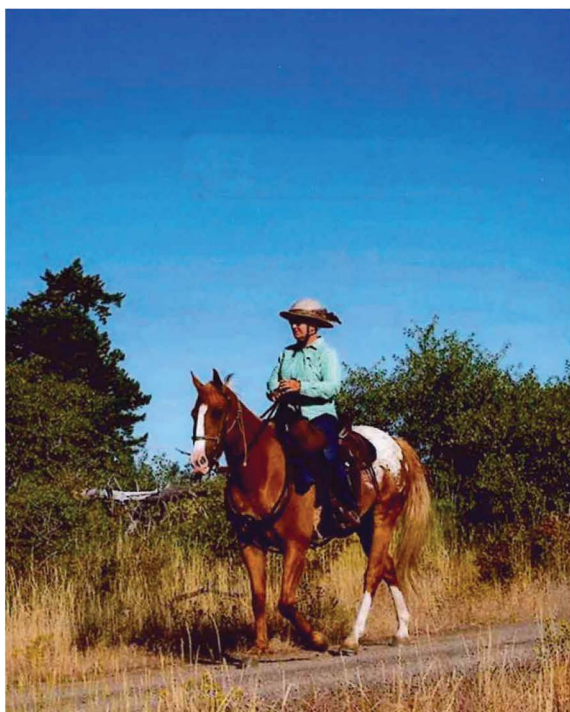
Some of the "real" trail situations are not always so glamorous. I remember riding the Chief Joseph over the continental divide coming into the West Gate of Yellowstone when we were caught in a hail storm. Hail was pinging off my helmet and the horses had to endure quite a pelting. Another time on the Land of Liberty ride at the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania, our group rode most of the morning in a driving rain. We huddled in our wet slickers and sat on our horses at noon trying to eat soggy sandwiches for lunch. A second incident on the Land of Liberty trail ride, a rider fell off while trying to negotiate a very steep incline. She fell into the muddy, rocky ditch below fracturing a couple of vertebrae. I sat with her and her husband in that ditch for most of two hours until emergency services arrived. That same rider had the grit to join us and 10 of our friends to ride an eight-day pack trip over the Headquarters Pass in the Bob Marshall Wilderness a few years later. Another good friend got into a nest of ticks when riding the Apache Land Ride in Oklahoma but that has not deterred her love for trail riding. The Sheltowee Ride is always the first week in October and we are almost guaranteed to get into ground bees at least once. Both riders and horses just learn to cope with the critters. These types of incidents provide fodder for stories around the campfire for many years to come.

Admittedly, I have had a couple of unscheduled dismounts on these rides. It's hard to be dignified, and certainly not glamorous, when you are covered in mud or drenched from being dropped in a water hole. I did discover that a helmet full of water is quite heavy, making it a bit more challenging to right yourself very quickly.

At this point you are probably wondering why trail riders subject themselves to such conditions. It's hard to list all the rewards gained from the experience of trail riding. Simplisti-







cally, it's five days of riding, having your meals catered and being entertained. Riding those trails affords the opportunity to see scenery and wild animals that you would not see from a windshield. It's difficult to explain the thrill of the adventure and sense of accomplishment when you have ridden some remote, challenging mountain trail. The ultimate reward is making lifelong friends from across the United States. It doesn't matter what walk of life you come from, trail riders have that common bond in their love of their animals.

It has been during some of those challenging situations that I have learned to appreciate those folks who have supported us riders. The trail bosses spend countless hours planning the event. The scouts keep us safe, help everyone out when trouble arises and generally keeps us from getting lost on. The ride physician, veterinarian and farrier deal with all sorts of illness, injury and shoe issues. Other support staff prepare our food,

keep our camps in order, pack necessary gear and entertains us. I would like to thank each and every one of them for all they do on behalf of us "real" trail riders.

Personally, I would like to thank my sister, Viane, for riding those 50 ApHC-sanctioned rides with me. She has been the consummate planner organizing our itinerary before we leave home, plotting the routes to drive, making overnight arrangements and picking fuel stops.

All in all, I greatly admire the elegance and beauty of the trail class participants. Admittedly, the "real" trail riding is occasionally not so glamorous, but it offers tremendous rewards and personal satisfaction. I encourage all Appaloosa owners to give it a try and come join us in the woods or on the mountain. Just pack a slicker for those not-so-glamorous days! We would love to see new faces on the trails.

~ Vicki Evenson