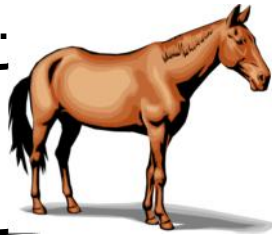


Notes from....



# Serrano Creek Ranch Equestrian Center

APRIL 2012

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In the last year, the two Grand Dames of the stable have passed. Jo Farrar and Joan Thomas had been fixtures of the stable for literally decade upon decade, both arriving at the stable in the early 80's. For we who began working around that time, Jo's and Joan's passings represent the end of an era. There was nothing better or worse about that time; it just had its own unique cast of characters. When they were alive, they were the link that connected today with yesterday. Now with their absence, that link is gone. The only doors to then, now only exist in our minds.

A very warm memorial service was held for Joan at the stable. Credit for such a heartfelt experience goes to Brianna Leahy for not only seeing the need for the celebration, but then organizing it in such a meaningful way. In a moment of quiet that night, I realized that stable was being passed to the next generation. Then three faces flashed- Brianna, Ashley, and Lupe. For these three represent the new wave at Serrano Creek.

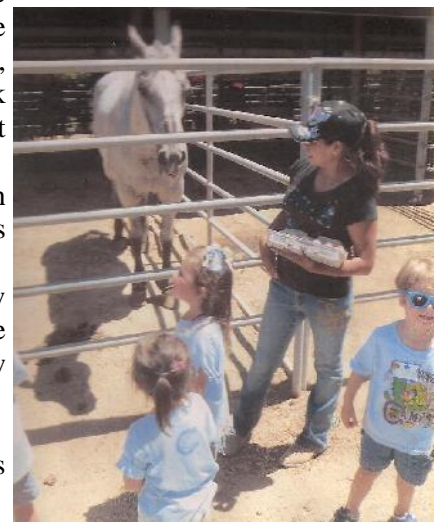


Brianna was just 6 when she took her first lesson, and now she's matured to where she is holding a memorial. With a newly completed

BS from Cal Poly Pomona, she is ready to take on the world. She "gets" teaching, she "gets" the new technologies of today, and of course she has long "gotten" the love horses. This week she inaugurated her new riding academy, and this is a testament to her commitment to creating a space for the next generation of riders.

Ashley Martin's story begins similarly, with her coming at a young age to take a beginning lesson. Flash forward 20 years and now she is a truly wonderful rider. Ashley is clearly an old soul, having a wisdom that exceeds her chronological age by decades. Horse and student alike both respond to her Zen master approach to riding. If Ashley needed a description, it would be tranquility. For there are no problems, no drama, just quiet a confidence that produces such wonderful horses and riders.

And then there is Lupe Vasquez. To many she just runs the feed store. But she handles much of the office duties that then frees up Susie to focus on larger projects. When the stable took over the feed store, there was no question that only Lupe could do such a wonderful job. While not literally born at the stable, she has been her since her third day. Because of her wide range of skills, she is the jack of all trades that seamlessly moves between the various functions. Every new venture of the stable now relies on Lupe.



It is very encouraging that these three young women epitomize such a

respect for horses, people, and themselves. What a great compliment to the stable that three such impressive young women began their lives here. Now they are in a position to guide the following generation with the degree of respect that they themselves possess.

In the last month we have searched for one additional instructor to provide entree into English riding. Besides being knowledgeable in this style, more importantly we looked for someone that is a good fit with Serrano. Our sense of community is somewhat unique, and that person had to embrace that difference. To that end, we chose Tania Jones. She has many qualities that make her a good fit. She is calm, is a wonderful rider, and connects well with both people and horses. Additionally she has a genuine desire to be a member of the Serrano team, not to use Serrano for own gain. To assist in her success, Leslie and Brianna are acting as mentors so that she can learn the "Serrano" way. I will be assisting her in classroom presentations until she develops her clientele. When all trainers pull in the same direction, things go very well here. Cooperation rather than completion makes for a wonderful stable environment.

During the halcyon days of the housing boom, the stable had a long waiting list, and to be honest, we got somewhat lazy about investing in creating the next generation of riders and owners. Now we find that in these tough times, it is again time to cultivate the new generation. To enter the stable, one needs a "door". That door is beginning lessons and riding academies. By creating a positive environment (which the stable has in spades), we can provide a wonderful experience where students become riders. Brianna has created a riding academy to provide an entry to Western riding. The stable has created a riding academy that will instead focus on the very basics of riding. Tania and I will team-teach until she becomes proficient. From there the Serrano Riding academy will foster those activities that bring riders together, regardless of disciplines. Susie ran an academy years ago, and the bonds that were formed among the girls are still strong today. No matter the specific forum that a student enters, the primary lesson that is taught is respect for horses and others. Nicole who taught here until recently, was magnificent in impressing this on her girls. They were a real joy to have around.

I've found that the best cure for stable burnout is that eager face visiting the stable for the first time. For these boys and girls (age doesn't count here) see horses and the stable as absolutely magical. You may ask - "Are there *any* kids like this left in this modern,

video game world?" Just know that Brianna sold over 600 lessons in 48 hours a few months back. If we can attract these new participants, facilitate a childhood of wonderful experiences, and in the process help them mature into responsible adults, how lucky are we. Maybe in the next group is the future Brianna, Ashley, or Lupe!



We are quite pleased with the recently completed stable sign. Careful observers have noted that that address is wrong. Well, here's double wrong right back at those folks. Finally after 40 years of detail explanations, we no longer need to say, "Our address is on the wrong side of the street; look for us on even / west side." In fact our management efficiency experts have determined that changing the address to reflect the correct side would save million\$ over the next 40 years by eliminating this excessive verbiage. Things have gone well except occasionally the post office won't deliver mail with the 25200 number. It's possible that your mail may be returned "undeliverable". Don't worry, Lupe has been "challenging" the post office to get it right .

*"We don't have problems, only challenges"*

-Anonymous