

LEADERS INNOVATORS
MENTORS ADVOCATES
EDUCATORS
~ 2016 ~
PIONEERS

The Women In Our Industry HONOR ROLL

This theme, now in year eight, celebrates the enormous, indeed disproportionate, influence women have on our industry.

We recognize that the Morgan community, throughout its history, has not merely provided acceptance. Rather women have proven that they are more than equal in the areas of vision, direction, accomplishment, and utilization of the breed.

The Morgan industry has not been male-centric. Women have been leaders, mentors, educators, innovators, adjudicators, pioneers, counselors, and advocates.

The staff of *The Morgan Horse* has, for the eighth year, searched our archives, asked our advisors and brainstormed in meetings to generate a long list and then the short list that appears here. The Honor Roll is never intended to be complete. We will add names to it annually. We strive, in one issue each year, to be sure the list is as varied, diverse, and colorful as the breed itself.

Ladies, you continue to inspire us.

Connie at Motherlode Show with Aranaway Toranado in 2014 (right) and (bottom) with Shirley Kock, Betty Green, and Aranaway Toranado in 2009 (Right photo © McCool).



Connie Barker HOT ON THE TRAIL

Constance "Connie" Barker deserves this peer recognition for her innumerable efforts to promote and foster the Morgan breed, to lead and educate, and to participate in everything Morgan on the local, state (California), and national levels.

Locally, the Sacramento Valley Morgan Horse Club (SVMHC), has benefited from her tireless energy; with the production of the Mother Lode Morgan and Open Breed horse show; the Morgan Exhibit Booth at the Western States Horse EXPO attracting 50,000 horse lovers to Sacramento; managing the SVMHC newsletter, *Hoof Beats*; and much more.

Connie, near retirement age, entered the Morgan milieu about 1990 learning horsemanship, pleasure horse riding, and trail obstacle training from Betty Greene, a popular and accomplished trainer who was located near Connie's Ebony Acres in Carmichael, California. Their friendship continues to this day. Betty helped Connie find and purchase her first Morgan mare, Black Velvet Justina (Windswept Ramon x Impala Ebony Princess) and piloted the pair to an incredible number of blues and tricolors over many years. They showed Class A Morgan Trail classes and honed their skills at open breed shows in Northern California. They won the coveted Gold-N-Grand Trail Horse Championship Trophy, leaving no doubt Morgans are contenders in high stakes trail horse competition. Connie realized a dream by capturing the Reserve World Champion Trail Horse title at the Grand National in 1998 and the Grand National



Champion Western Trail Amateur in 1999. Today, though competing less, Connie keeps her newest trail horse, Aranaway Toranado (The Millionaire x Mandarin Rose), a.k.a Zorro, primed to continue the path of excellence in trail horse competition.

AMHA awarded her the title of 2009 Woman of the Year. The Morgan world has benefitted greatly from instructive articles (published in *The Morgan Horse*) authored by Connie on the art of training and negotiating obstacles confronted in arena trail competition. Most recently, she has taken an interest in the preservation of the Point Reyes National Seashore Morgan Horse Ranch, located in Marin County, north of San Francisco (see separate article on the Point Reyes Morgans in this issue). Connie is collaborating with AMHA, the Morgan historian, Brenda Tippin, and contacting California state and federal agencies to plead the case to keep the small seacoast ranch as a viable Living History Museum and Morgan Horse Farm.

Hat's off to Connie Barker!

Phyllis Shopbell



Ellen Feld STORYTELLER

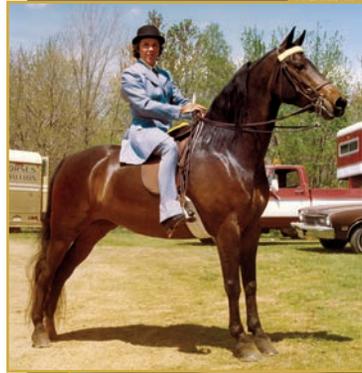
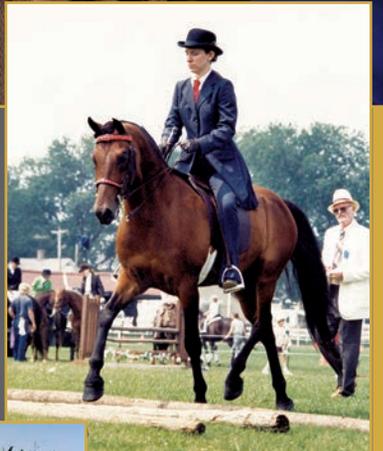
Chances are if you have children, Ellen Feld's books are in your home. Her best selling series for nine-to-13-year-olds features real Morgans as the pivotal characters. As a young teen, Ellen was actually in the stall when her first Morgan, Don Lee Rusty, took his first breath. Rusty's heritage made it possible for the gelding to tackle the dozens of adventures Ellen shared with him. The pair competed in everything from classic pleasure to barrel racing at shows in Northampton, Massachusetts.

In 1994, after completing her education, marrying Michael Feld, and settling into a career at Amherst College, Ellen and husband set out to choose a stallion to cross with their mare. At Rum Brook Farm in New Hampshire, they looked at Immortal Command. Instead a cute four-month old black colt barged in and it was Rum Brook Immortal Star (a.k.a Blackjack) that Ellen brought home. With Blackjack as her muse, Ellen published *Blackjack: Dreaming of a Morgan Horse*, which went on to win the International Children's Book Council's coveted Children's Choice Award. This paved the way for Blackjack, the horse—and the book—to become the 2007 Breyer Animal Creation. The young woman and her Morgan set out on tour to meet their fans.

Nine books later (plus capturing another Children's Choice Award) it is estimated that something in the area of 200,000 young readers have read the Morgan horse adventures. If a horse is in their future, you can bet they'll want it to be Morgan. Ellen Feld's far-reaching promotion through her books makes her a worthy inductee.

Patti Brooks

Ellen Feld with Rum Brook Immortal Star, star of the Blackjack novels and his Breyer model (above) and with Don Lee Rusty winning a 1970s Trail Class after walking seven miles to the show (right) (Photos © Andy Illes, Phaneuf).



Kay Thompson at the 2015 Granite State show (below) and with Highover Lady Oaklyn (left) (Bottom photo © Amy Bean).

Kay Thompson POWER TO WOMEN

Katharine "Kay" Thompson is one of the original purveyors of "Girl Power." Kay has always believed in the power and abilities of women in the Morgan breed. She has mentored many young



women and girls and has set a firm precedent for them to follow. She has always been determined in the belief that women can run a farm, breed for quality, and train horses. Kay has been a force in her support of AMHA youth programs and has served as a horsemaster examiner and mentor to Youth of the Year contestants. Her students have won local, regional, and national Youth of the Year contests. She has seen students rise to the Justin Morgan and Blackhawk horsemastership badge levels.

Kay has been a stalwart when it comes to the Morgan horse. She has bred Morgans with the Highover prefix for the last 60 plus years. She has been responsible for some very important breeding stock. Many will find her influences in the bloodlines of their horses. Kay brought Donlyn Of Windcrest out of obscurity and he became a dominant sire in the Northeast during his life. Her savvy in the breeding of Morgans has produced a long line of champions.

Kay has been honored as a member of the Northampton Hall of Fame. She was inducted into AMHA Hall of Fame in 2000 and was the winner of the 2010 AMHA Youth Person of the Year Award. She has also been honored with The Maine Morgan, Granite State Morgan, and New England Morgan horse shows dedications. She has been in leadership positions throughout her life in the Granite State Morgan Horse Society and New England Morgan Horse Association, holding the position of president in both.

Today it is safe to say that generations of Morgan horse enthusiasts have gotten their start and inspiration from Kay Thompson. She is a Morgan breed icon!

Selina Cloutier



Valerie Low and Nancy Vidler with Scotch On The Rocks (top) and at the 2010 New York Regional Barn Sale (bottom)

(Top photo © Sharon Skelly).

Valerie Low **HISTORY'S KEEPER**

I met Valerie over 30 years ago and we've become lifelong friends which has been a blessing. She was new to the Morgan breed then, but has had a passion for horses since childhood. Valerie has owned several Morgans throughout her life. One of her favorites, Scotch On The Rocks, won many championships, both under saddle and in pleasure driving, and, later in life, carriage driving. Valerie and her girls spent many years enjoying him.

Valerie first served the New York State Morgan Horse Society as a correspondent, and Western New York Show Secretary, but her calling came when the New York Club needed a historian. In search of a volunteer, up went Valerie's hand. She was excited. Her love for history and the importance of sharing it with future generations was the beginning of a new era for both the NYSMHS and the AMHA.

It was not enough that she was the brainchild to set up a website for the club, one of the first! With so many older club members still alive why not visit them and do taped interviews? I was fortunate enough to help with some of the early interviews. I quickly realized that Valerie has a way of making people comfortable enough to talk about themselves and forget they are on camera, which is a real talent. By the time Valerie left their home, she had a new friend and an invite to come back anytime. People trusted her professionalism and honesty.

Some of her interviews include Fred and Jeanne Herrick, Mary Jean Vasiloff, Bob Brooks, Claire Murphy, Hal Hoover, and many others. All of these tapes are copied to the families first for approval, and then the NYSMHS and AMHA.

Valerie's love for people goes beyond the Morgan world. She has two therapy dogs she takes to nursing homes on weekends. She has volunteered at a local hospice home to bring comfort to the dying. Valerie still works a full time job, has raised two beautiful daughters, and loves hunting for and refurbishing antiques.

Nancy Vidler

Jackie Sweeney KEEPING THE FAITH

I would like to nominate Jackie Sweeney of HyLee Farm in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin. She has been a longtime breeder who always has her door open to any and all who are interested in the Morgan horse. She would spend the time talking to you about breeding, the Morgan horse, horse shows, futurities, the past and the present, or whatever your interest. Jackie has been a wonderful source of information on our breed to all who know her. She and her mother (the late Jane Steffenhagen) have had many stallions on their farm that have produced very nice offspring in all divisions. She has had a close relationship with Kohler Stables over the years, and some of her breedings show these wonderful bloodlines. Her mom was a longtime breeder, as well, meaning Jackie has been involved since she was young. She has hosted many clinics over the years with various topics covered. She has hosted the HyLee Auction, allowing people who needed to sell their horses a venue to get this done. I purchased my first Morgan show horse, HyLee's La Fenice, a beautiful hunt horse, from her 15 years ago. She has sold so many horses over the years to people in the upper Midwest region and nationally. She has also spearheaded the Morgan Masterpiece Horse Show every July in OshKosh, Wisconsin. Jackie has been a board member for North Central Morgan Horse Association for many years and she has been a strong force on our NCMA Futurity for all the breeders in our North Central region.

Sadly, she just lost her wonderful husband, Doc Sweeney, about a month ago. He was a leading veterinarian in our area, a character for sure, beloved by all of us as a wonderful vet, but also as a super person. He was a show vet for many of the shows in our area, and just like Jackie, willing to talk to anyone, definitely as sweet as they come.

Jackie has slowed down her breeding, but is still active and has many Morgans on her farm. She teaches lessons at her farm, as well. She has promoted her Morgans at the Wisconsin Horse Expo, and won the Farm & Fleet 2011 most beautiful horse contest with her beautiful Western horse, HyLee Galaxy's Wild Irish (HyLee's Galaxy Seven x HVK Irish Wild Rose). Keep in mind this contest started with more than 80 breeds presenting! She is a stellar horsewoman, a great promoter, and a good friend to many. Jackie is a great example of what a lifetime of quiet leadership can do to engage people in the Morgan breed, and the equine industry at large.

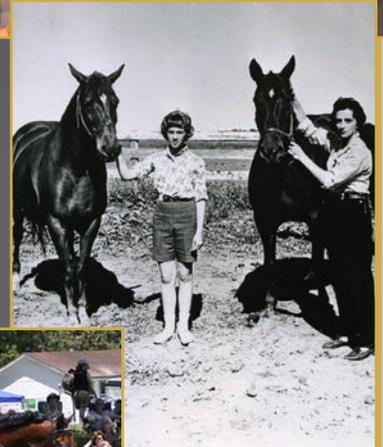
Kirsten Johnson

Jo Rench AMBASSADOR

Now 73, Jo is starting her thirteenth year of promoting the Morgan breed to literally hundreds of thousands of people. Jo and Grandlee High And Mighty, "Snapper" (who she bought as a three-year-old and trained herself), have crisscrossed the country



Jackie Sweeney accepting the 2014 AMHA Club of the Year Contest Award from Jeff Gove (above) and with HyLee's Lady Justin, Dolly Mae, and Jane Steffenhagen (right).



Jo Rench and Grandlee High And Mighty (left) and with Presley Stroud (below) (Bottom photo © Howard Schatzberg).





Karen Homer Brown judging a class at the 2012 Granite State show (above) and at the 2013 Mother Lode show (right).



Dorothea Hildreth and Sharthunder (below).



countless times; driving her own truck and trailer; performing at a long list of venues from Kentucky Horse Park at Rolex (by invitation), the Kentucky Derby Parade, the Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade, Equifests, and many other all breed exhibitions where she has done solo performances and flag presentations. Their first flag presentation saw her riding sidesaddle, dressed in a 1790s period costume, the same time period that the Morgan breed began.

At the same time they were performing, she trained and competed Snapper in dressage, hunter/jumper, endurance, trail, and eventing. He was the High Point Reserve Champion Open Jumper at Grand National in 2014. She has also been AMHA's Open Competition Champion High Point Hunter/Jumper in 2014, and in the same year, Reserve Champion In Hand and third in Trail. She has many other awards for all those open shows, and also awards from the International and National Sidesaddle Associations.

She grew up riding Thoroughbreds in Virginia, showing hunters and foxhunting. When she bought Snapper, it was because she wanted a horse that could do everything and she knew a Morgan could. They have certainly proven that. Many have probably seen her at Nationals, but do not know who she is. For the past six or so years, she has been the woman at the outgate in the Show Arena. We all need to know her for the heroine she is.

Vicki Bennett

Karen Homer Brown **DIVERSE AS THE BREED SHE SERVES**

Karen Homer Brown is the consummate horsewoman. Not only does she handle reins well and is an avid whip, she also has judging cards for many breeds and disciplines. Karen's willingness to serve has proven to be a path to involvement; she judges, and ringmasters, and is active with USEF committees as well as breed and discipline organizations; as an early supporter of Western Dressage, Karen served on the board of that association during its formative years. In addition to all this, Karen lends her expertise to the Judges' Education Committee.

Karen's parents, Lore and Bernie Homer, are also involved in equine activity and passed the gene on to their daughter. (Lore is a notable whip and Bernie is a full supporter.) She is married to Guy Brown, of Brown's Hoss-pitality, and together they officiate, compete, share their extensive knowledge, and volunteer in the carriage division.

Karen is a dedicated and loyal friend to the Morgan horse. We welcome her to the Women's Honor Roll.

Georgie Green

Dorothea Hildreth **ON THE RANCH WITH MORGANS**

Dorothea Hildreth was first introduced to using ranch Morgans by George and Estella Shaffner, who began raising Morgans in the 1940s, on their ranch west of Dillon, Montana, with stock from the Jackson Ranch. Dorothea recalls the Shaffner stallion and mares ran free in the Rockies, and colts would be brought in to

break for ranch use when they were four or five years old. Dorothea and her husband purchased two Shaffner Morgans to use on their ranch. Dorothea's horse was a chestnut gelding named Splash, so named because his face mark looked like milk running down his nose. Although he had a habit of spooking at other things, he loved working cattle and was steady as a rock. Splash was gored by a longhorn bull, tearing the muscles in his chest and could not be ridden after that, but Dorothea never forgot the Morgans of those early days. Later, when Dorothea moved to a smaller ranch near Lima, Montana, she was determined to breed Morgans for ranch work and began her program in 1980, starting with foundation stock from Myrtle Neeley. In 1990, she purchased her foundation stallion, Sharthunder (Wyoming Flyhawk x Triple S Ebonella), who was both a working ranch horse and champion Morgan International Cowhorse Association stallion. Dorothea strives to produce Morgans with excellent conformation, good feet and legs, intelligence, friendliness, stamina, and natural using ranch ability. Altogether she has produced more than 80 Morgans and is one of the few remaining resources of true old time working ranch Morgans.

Brenda Tippin

Gary Adams DEDICATED ORGANIZER

In 1981, Gay, who had ridden in her teens, convinced her husband John that they needed a horse for her to ride. Looking for a five-to-eight-year-old mare, they, of course, lost their hearts to a darling new-born Morgan colt, thus beginning Sunstone Morgans in Oregon City, Oregon!

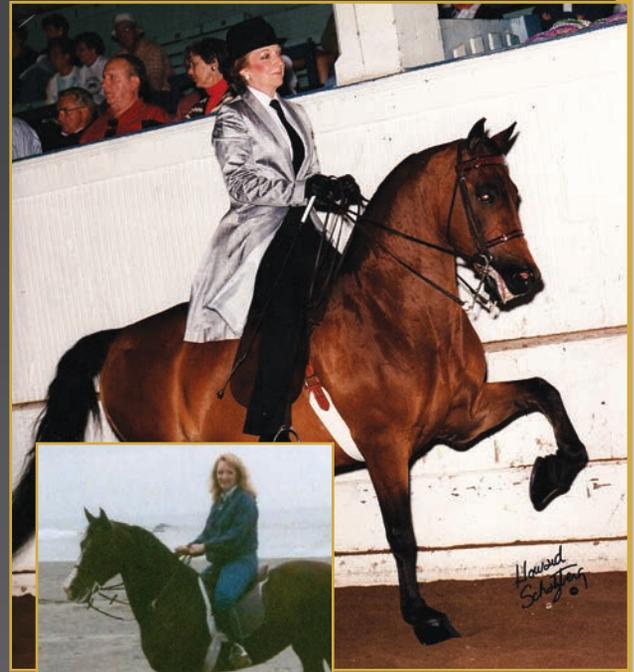
For years, DJP Cassanova, with husband John, was a crowd favorite winning team at the shows. Gay had acquired Funquest Dolly and was showing in the ladies classes. In 2000, their daughter graduated high school leading them to retire from the show circuit to trail ride and enjoy horses at home. Deciding to raise a foal, they purchased Scandias Springtyme Lady, who was in foal to UVM Coming Attraction.

The new foal in 2008 gave Gay the incentive to rejoin the Morgan Horse Association of Oregon (MHAO) and return to the show circuit. She was shocked how the horse community had shrunk in her absence. Gay remembered the shows with more than 250 horses and the MHAO with 350 members.

Since then Gay has immersed herself into the Morgan mainstream to promote and advance the breed in the Northwest. She is the current president of the MHAO. She is chairman of the nationally recognized MHAO Stallion Service Auction and the growing MHAO Breeders Cup Futurity. She publishes annually the *Breeders Cup Magazine* and this year a color SSA Calendar. Gay serves on the Board of the Oregon Horse Council and is the Far West Regional Show board secretary. She is also the founding force of the Northwest Morgan Horse Promotional Task Force creating a networking system of Morgan people for resources and promotion.

Gay Adams's effort in the Northwest to unite individuals and clubs on behalf of the Morgan breed is amazing. Her dedication and achievements are an inspiration to us all! She truly deserves to be on the Honor Roll for Women in the Morgan horse breed. ■

Nancy Eidam



Gay Adams with DJP Cassanova (above) and (left) with Funquest Dolly (show photo © Howard Schatzberg).

PAST INDUCTEES

2009: Marilyn Childs • Martha V. Dupont • Anna Ela & Ruth Orcutt • Betty Greene • Helen Greenwalt • Anita Hoitsma • Gloria Jones • Frances Pugh • Sid Spencer • Pat Tataronis Orcutt • Mary Jean Vasiloff • Judy Whitney Harris • Mary Woolverton **2010:** Beth Benard • Chris Cassenti • Simy Corbin • Nancy Eidam • Travis Filipek • Susan, Ling and Iann Fu • Margaret Gardiner • Georgie Green • Elberta Honstein • Jeanne Mellin Herrick • Carol Simpson • Jane Steffenhagen **2011:** Peggy Alderman • Barbara Beaumont Cole • Debbie Beth Halachmy • Bobbi Blankenship • Angela Conner Bulmer • Elaine Galatz • Barbara Irvine • Jennifer McFall • Cindy Nord • Elizabeth Power • Lynne Shpak • Bonnie Sogoloff **2012:** Laura Behning • Mary Cockriel • Frieda Datte Waer • Ellen DiBella • Ann Hailey • Carol Hudson • Maretta Kennedy • Suzy Lucine • Karen Myers • Judy Nason • Crescent Peirce • Polly Quinn • Barb Rudicel • Lisa Singer **2013:** Ann Anderson • Cheri Barber • Joan Bowers • Josette Conti • Jane Elliot • Susan Hanley • Anne Mears • Renee Page • Nancy Plimpton • Suzy Stafford • Ann Taylor **2014:** Paulette Bodnar • Muriel Burnheimer • Mary Carlton • Helen Crawford • Sherry Cole • Jo Johnson • Heidi Kunkel • Joyce Metters • Carol Potts • Shelly Temple • Brenda Tippin • June Brockett Wright **2015:** Terry Jones Brennan • Diane Conrady • Cindy Mugnier • Kathy Newcomb • Beverley Olson • Kathleen Peeples • Colleen Bernaby Saint Loup • Mona Sansoucy • Mona Skager • Ruth Towne • Dorothy White • Anne Wyland