May 2021 Regina Rose (by Elayne Barclay)

The endurance season in the PNER region has begun and it is time for a new PNER member focus. This focus is on the manager of one of the first rides of the season (Tough Sucker) and one of the last (Owyhee Halloween): Regina Rose.

Regina was a horse crazy 8 year old with no access to horses but her mother worked at a dairy milking cows, so she improvised: “I tamed one of the young heifers and taught her to be ridden”. I sure wish there was some video clips of that! Regina moved on from backing heifers to pleading with a family friend to allow her to ride his horse. She recalls that she “begged and begged to ride the gelding and he finally said I could ride the unsociable gelding if I could catch him. I followed that old Morgan/TB gelding around for over 2 hours before he gave up and let me catch him so I could ride him.” By the time she was 12 years old, the gelding's owner had become Regina's step father and he was getting tired of her always riding his horse so he bought her 2 POA ponies. The ponies were from a dispersal sale, due to foal, and unbroken. Regina admits, “I did not know what I did not know. I just got on them and started riding them. I got dumped a few times, but the ponies were broke to ride and to drive and the foals soon to follow.” Pretty impressive for a 12 year old!

Regina's family moved from the Pacific Northwest to Wyoming in 1970 where she joined a saddle club and started competing in O-Mok-See events (I had to look that up, in case you haven't heard of it before, it originated with the Blackfoot Indian tribe and described a particular style of war ceremony riding which translated as“riding big”). Regina won 6th in the nation in the “Barrel & Stake” event on one of the foals out of her POA. The saddle club also put on endurance rides and Regina completed her first one in 1971 riding one of her ponies. She started volunteering at rides early on. The club put on the first Big Horn 100 in 1969 and Regina remembers, “I marked and unmarked trail, did secretary stuff, and helped with everything on the ride until I moved back to Idaho in 1992. Luckily for PNER, Regina continues to volunteer at rides and was recognized for her contributions in 2020 by being the recipient of AERC's Volunteer Service Award. Last year she “pioneered” the City of Rocks Pioneer ride as the first ride manager in the PNER region to put on a ride after Covid restrictions were in place. Once again she had to improvise to meet all the requirements for AERC sanctioning and public land permits. She rescheduled the entire ride by a day to be able to take advantage of less restrictive measures.

Since that first ride in 1971, Regina has ridden over 15,000 endurance miles! When asked how many 100 mile rides she has done, she replied, “ I have no clue, but I have done somewhere between 20 and 30. I never thought about keeping count, just loved to ride.” When asked about her mounts for all those miles, Regina said, “I just rode the horse I had at the time, any breed. I have ridden Arabians, Arab/draft crosses, mules, Appaloosas, Quarter Horses, and my pony. Loved them all and did well on all of them. All my horses and my mule were retired for old age not unsoundness.”

When asked about her favorite memory riding endurance Regina said, “I think my favorite memories are of riding my mule [named “Mule”]. She was half Thoroughbred and could run, I did over 1000 miles on her in one season. That was one of my goals for her. I loved riding her and would just have to race people to the finish line when we were at rides. I would be riding along with someone and we could see we were getting close to the finish line and you could just see by the look on the other rider's face that they were thinking that they were not getting beat by a mule, so they would trot a little faster and Mule would keep up and then they would break into a canter because they could see the finish line, but too late for them, 'cause when Mule and I broke from the fast trot it was not a canter but a dead-out run and did I mention, she was half Thoroughbred, bye bye! Mule could really run and I got the biggest kick out of out-running a horse whose rider did not want to be beat by a good mule.”

Another vivid memory is of her Tevis completion. “I rode Tevis in 1984 and there were 300 riders that year. I had no crew and had improvised by persuading a volunteer to take the horse trailer and rig to Auburn. The same volunteer took some grain and food to the vet check at Forest Hill. The rest of the time we just used the hay and stuff everyone else had left from their horses and some folks gave us stuff when they heard we did not have a crew. We made it past Forest Hill as it was getting dark. It was so dark along the river under the trees you could not see anything. The folks at the river had a fire going, but you could only see the fire as you rode along trying to get there on the trail, and the river was high, so they told you where to cross when you got to the edge. The end of the ride that year was across the river and then up a steep trail into the east end of town where you finished and then led your horse to the fairgrounds on pavement to get your completion. Surprisingly, there was a foot race at the same time as the horse event. As I was going up that steep narrow trail I saw a person climbing up the same trail. I said what are you doing? He said I am running the Tevis and I said, oh my gosh you are nuts, and he said, what are you doing? I said I was riding the Tevis and he said I was crazy! So horse passed runner in the dark and both of us finished, he came in a few minutes behind my horse. I finished with a half hour to spare.”

Looking back Regina said, “The best times at endurance rides are when we are all sitting around waiting for the 100 milers to finish. At Owyhee Tough Sucker 100 we were waiting up with the vets along with a few other folks and the stories flowed, good and bad, the out house stories are the best, and everyone has a great out house story. Folks that go to bed miss the good stories.”

Don't miss the good stories!