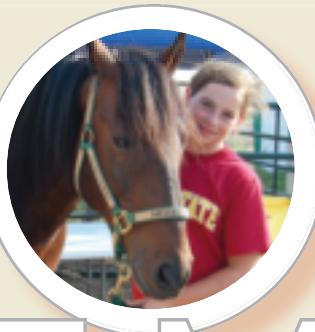


KNOWING WHAT MATTERS



With the support of companies in the equine trade industry, a once-wild mustang has gained countless fans and become an ambassador for NARHA.

By Sarah Muirhead, Publisher

Our life's experiences—at least to some extent—make us who we are. In the case of one very special horse with humble beginnings in the “wild,” that certainly is the case; and thanks to WAHL Corp. and owners of the Shooting Star Ranch in Darby, Mont., Nevada Joe is now applying his experiences as a wild mustang to make a difference in the lives of the handicapped. Nevada Joe is a wild mustang captured by the Bureau of Land Management in 2000, who in a few short years rose to become a national celebrity in the therapeutic riding world.

Today, his owners and trainers, Ernie and Diane Purcelli of Shooting Star Ranch, consider Joe to be one of the most trusted horses in the barn.

“He’s very intelligent. I think it’s because mustangs learn to be a horse. They fend for themselves and take care of themselves. Now, if I show Joe something once, he does it,” said Ernie.

Nevada Joe’s wild side also helps him adapt readily to unfamiliar situations. While other horses are often easily

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spooked when they come across deer or elk coming into view, Joe isn't at all bothered by them and just continues about his business. He's just used to being around other wild animals, according to Ernie.

Nevada Joe began his journey with the Fox Lake Herd in the desert of Nevada and was adopted by the Bureau of Land Management as part of the Wild Horse Project.

From there, WAHL brought Nevada Joe to its equestrian center and trained him. His progress was documented each step

of the way.

Since leaving the Wahl Equestrian Center, Nevada Joe has experienced numerous equine disciplines and has been keeping busy training for new events. In 2003 at the Dodge World Toughest Rodeo, barrel racing caught his eye, so Nevada Joe participated in a Sharon Camarillo Clinic at Black Hawk College in Illinois.

Next he found cowboy-mounted shooting a new challenge and entered the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association's (CMSA) Nationals in Mississippi with Diane in the rifle competition.

He also entered the Ladies 1 Division and won reserve champion. Last November, Ernie and Joe competed and placed at the Arizona State Finals Mounted Shooting Competition.

Nevada Joe also participates in trick riding. He's been involved with the Montana Junior Rodeo circuit and competed in Goat Tying, winning third place at the end of the season.

In 2006, he was named Ambassador for the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA). He was instrumental in developing the first-ever CMSA Therapeutic Shootout. The shootout focuses on the same skills as a shootout with guns, but uses dowel rods and balloons for development of hand-eye coordination. It gives participants the opportunity to experience physical, psychological and educational benefits when astride a horse. Riding on a horse gently and rhythmically moves the rider's trunk and pelvis in a manner similar to that of the human walk, with resulting improvement in coordination, balance, flexibility, strength and control, said Diane.

"The whole core of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association and Shooting Star is to ride to the rider's ability, not to their disability," Diane said. "The goal is for the riders to ride independently, without someone leading them, and 80 percent of our students do."

While it is difficult to pick a most memorable moment, Diane recalled the ride of an autistic child who spoke for the first time when put upon Nevada Joe during a session. The bonds that riders of all ages make with him are amazing, she said, noting that many like to keep in touch with him through e-mail.

Joe has his very own Breyer horse doll and is featured on every package of Wahl clippers. He also has his own Tucker Nevada Joe saddle.

Nevada Joe is a true example of how a horse—no matter what its humble beginning—can inspire others to reach out and make a difference, giving them life experiences that will undoubtedly be influential in the molding of their futures. To the Purcellis and their sponsors, we commend you for your dedication and commitment to making this human-animal interaction possible.

Nevada Joe

You're brown and you're strong for riding along
You're furry and soft for sitting across
You're silky and smooth, I can feel every move
Your eyes are so kind, I wish you were mine
You're gentle and caring, your love is for sharing
You have a big heart and patience, too
You are a gift to all who meet you
Your legs are strong, powerful and fast
But you take baby steps for the kids in your class
You're sleek and solid and have a strong chest
I like riding you backwards the best!
The wind in your mane and colored reins
Gives kids a chance to never be the same
You give kids hope and warm happy dreams
New friends and self-esteem
You're fun to ride and you keep me safe
Can I ride you in the next Extreme Cowboy Race?!!
You were wild and proud, now you're quiet and tame
You carry special riders and teach them games
You CAN do it all—you're my friend and it's true
Nevada Joe, I love you!!

- A poem from a life touched and changed by Nevada Joe

Visit www.TacknTogs.com to view an exclusive video interview with Diane Purcellis of Shooting Star Ranch. More information on Nevada Joe can be found at www.NevadaJoe.net