

Susan Keating

by Nicole Herrmann

Susan Keating, 55, is a force to be reckoned with! The retired shepherdess, currently instructing weaving and working as a dental hygienist, can usually be found at any of our Wisconsin distance rides. You might see her successfully competing in either riding or driving events. Her enthusiasm for horses and the different distance events is very obvious when you meet her. Her bubbly personality and positive attitude always “draw you in”, as does her excitement for learning and attacking challenges that come her way.



In 2007 Susan was looking for something constructive to do with her arab cross rescue, named Henry. She delved into distance riding and found it to be a great match for not only Henry, but herself as well. “I liked the folks I met and the positive impact it had on Henry,” Susan recalls. The pair continued their hard work and effort conditioning together, and received Novice Competitive Champion in 2007, and Rookie Reserve Competitive Champion in 2008.

In 2009 she decided to test the waters of distance driving with her Halflinger, Belle. The cute little team could always be seen in cart and harness at most distance events. Again the hard work, effort and conditioning paid off. She and her partner, Belle, received Rookie Driver of the Year for 2009, and Limited Distance Driver of 2009 as well.

For the upcoming 2010 season, Susan hopes to compete on Amazing Grace Experience, a five-year old Standardbred mare. She stated, “I intend to start Mazy in Competitive this year, and then move up to Endurance in the future.” There’s no doubt in my mind that she’ll reach those goals, as she is a very determined competitor!

When questioned if she had a favorite ride, she shared, “You bet I do! DRAWARAMA in the Southern Kettle Moraine, near Palmyra, WI is my favorite. It’s an intense 4-day competition and the sense of accomplishment from it, is great!” Susan has competed in Wisconsin and Illinois, and hopes to get to Minnesota and Indiana soon.

You might be wondering where she gets all of this conditioning done. “I condition on roads mostly, but like farm fields when they are available. I also like to go to Lake LeAquaNa State Park in Lena, Illinois. A real conditioning treat is going to JG Ranch at Scales Mound, Illinois!”

Susan has accumulated many miles, accomplished much, and looks forward to the future in distance riding. When asked what advice she would share with people just starting out? She replied, “Take full advantage of the novice and rookie divisions. You should definitely attend any of the clinics offered in the spring, through DRAW or ApDRA. It’s a fantastic chance to learn about this sport from experienced folks. Remember our motto. . . “To Finish Is To Win”. It’s true. Get started NOW! You and your horse will be winners!”