

Greener Pastures Transport:

MOVING HORSES IN ALL STAGES OF LIFE: AN INTERVIEW WITH BONNIE STEVENS

BY ALI SCHULTZ

The collected moments of horse ownership create sunny spaces in our hearts even when our cherished mounts are no longer with us. But that transition period that passes in the space between 'now' and 'then' is seldom planned for and can happen without warning – especially with the ever graceful equine. We often plan for our own passing, but do we ever really have a plan for our most trusted steed's ride into another world?

Bonnie Stevens, a Colorado horsewoman for over 38 years, is the owner and driver of Greener Pastures Horse Transport – a company she originally began to help horse owners make arrangements for the humane euthanasia and plans for their horse's final journey and resting place. Since then, her front range routes have expanded to include errands less weighty in the genre of equine ownership, including (but not limited to): emergency trips to the vet or CSU, boarding facility relocation, trailering to equine appointments or horse shows, and trailhead transport for day trips or extended pack trips.

I had talked with people who had been touched by Bonnie's work which marked with distinct gratitude for what she does: "She offers a very valuable service. It's becoming increasingly difficult to get a rendering company to come and haul away deceased animals. I'm glad she's helping out in the field. She's assisted me many times through some very difficult euthanasias," remarked Dr. Ed Wydalis. "Her work is so dignified. She says a prayer over the horse before she covers him and moves him into the 'the hearse,' or rather, her covered trailer. No one can see the animal as he's moving down the road," noted Fort Collins resident, Elmer Fortin. Shortly thereafter, I had a chance to catch up with the woman behind the wheel of this curious, but pertinent, career choice.

Q. What prompted you to start Greener Pastures?

A. The idea to start the company came to me when a friend's horse passed, and then one of our weanlings passed. The renderer in both instances was not a humane or caring option. I respected the horses too much to let them pass in an undignified manner.

Q. How long have you been hauling horses?

A. I've been hauling horses regionally on a personal level for the past 25 years as a competitor. As a career, however, it's been about 6 years this spring.

Q. Does greener pastures have a transport specialty?

A. We really are here to assist people through the difficult times with the passing of their loved animals. We also try to help with time sensitive live hauling situations. We provide a range of regional hauling solutions for live or deceased situations generally 24/7. For us and our job as a hauler in these scenarios, no task is too small or too unique.

Q. Are there any especially memorable stories from your work?

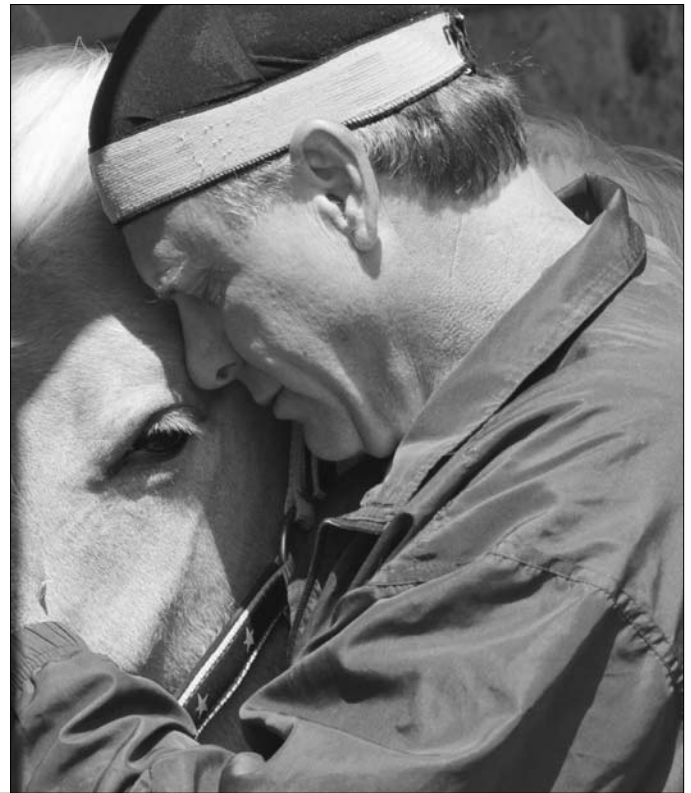
A. There are two stories that especially touched us. We helped a family from Lyons who had a gifted teaching horse named Sunshine, who was shared with local family and friends, lose the animal suddenly. At the service for him, there were 17 plus people there to show the beloved horse all their respect and love. Children came with flowers, and entire families shed tears for him. Another time, a grand mother of this one horse's family hosted a special Easter for her grand children and was hiding eggs the night before. After her last egg was hidden, she discovered that the horse had passed at almost midnight. She gave us a call, and we were able to take care of her loss before the kids arrived Easter morning!

Q. Are there any other hauling companies that do this, or have you carved a niche for yourself?

A. Of course there are other companies, but they don't have the tact in sensitive situations like we do. We really know horses and people and the emotional bonds that exist between them, and how tragic losing an animal or having an emergency situation can be. We don't haul away 'by-products.' We take care of deceased matters with integrity. I am dedicated to the respect the animals should receive because so many are treasured members

of their owner's family. I try to ease the difficulty of the emotionally trying times for the owners involved. We pride ourselves on finding answers to almost any hauling problem or challenge. As each hauling situation is unique, and so is our business, really.

For more information about Bonnie's work, you can contact her directly at 970-224-1761.



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