

Horse Lovers at Large

VOICES FROM THREE LONGTIME LOCAL HORSE FOLKS

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In this issue of the Horse's Mouth, we decided to check in with the "Horse Lovers At Large" group, to include voices from unaffiliated horse people. These would include backyard horse owners who have horses for pets, trail riders, enthusiasts who don't own horses but love them, volunteers at Colorado Horse Rescue, etc. The three individuals

selected as samples from this group have lived in the area for a considerable amount of time: Anne Davidson, Kathy Hibbard, and Amy Bowman. We asked them about their involvement in the local horse community and their thoughts on the state of the horse in Boulder County.

Anne Davidson

How long have you been in Boulder County?

I lived in Boulder County for 6 years. I now live in Lyons (Larimer County) and have been there for 9 years.

How long have you been involved with horses and in the Boulder County horse community?

I have been involved with horses for 23 years. I started out in hunter/jumper activities in Massachusetts. While in Boulder County, I leased a horse at Joder Arabian Ranch for 6 years. When I moved to Larimer County, my partner and I bought 3 horses over a few years and acquired an elderly 4th horse. My horse activities are focussed on trail riding.

How do you enjoy your horses currently?

Trail riding is my favorite activity with horses and I do that now, both out of my house and on Boulder County trails. I occasionally do riding/camping activities with my horses along with others.

Why Boulder County? What do you love about it?

I came out to Boulder County with my partner so that she could work as a professor at CU. I worked for several years out here and am now retired. We moved out of

Boulder County to get more land and space around us. We now have 22 acres, a barn and paddock area for the 4 horses, and lots of lovely space. I very much enjoy the open space trails that Boulder County provides.

Are horses part of your day job?

Horses are my day job now! I am responsible for all aspects of barn management and horse care. My horses are about 100 feet from the house - unless they are out in the fields.

Do you have any concerns about the future of horses in this area?

Yes, I have several. First, is the continued struggle to maintain and improve access to equestrians on all open space trails. Second is the selling of large horse properties for non-equine development, reducing the amount of horse properties available. Third is the economy, which makes hay more expensive and general horse care more precarious. We are fortunate to have a horse rescue agency in Boulder County, but with rising prices and diminishing ability to care for horses here, this agency may well be unable to handle the horses no longer able to be cared for.



Kathy Hibbard

How long have you been in Boulder County?

35 years.

How long have you been involved with horses and in the Boulder County horse community?

I started riding my Shetland pony, Snapper, at age 6 in the New Mexico hills on a sheep ranch where I grew up outside of Roswell. After college and a career, I bought my first horse as an adult over 14 years ago.

How do you enjoy your horses currently?

Riding in the mountains! I have ridden many areas in Montana and Wyoming. Early July, I was in Red Lodge, MT riding my beloved mule, Wanda (with a young grizzly bear, I might add) in the Bitterroot Mountains and headed up to the Flat Tops Wilderness area for some riding in August. I also try to ride dressage as much as I can. I will be riding in a jumping performance on Norwegian Fjords at the Boulder County Fair's Ballet on Horses on August 5th.

I want to learn as much horsemanship as I can, which makes me an avid horsewoman, usually spending many hours working with horses. Most riders who know and loves horses, consider it a blessing and not a "job"! Until there is poop to scoop...

Why Boulder County? What do you love about it?

I settled in Boulder County due to a career at CU in IT, bought a farm near Hygiene, and have been in the County since. I love the combination of rural life and city life that Boulder County offers.

Are horses part of your day job?

I participate with a horse/mule everyday. I guess I consider it a job in that all of us horsemen are trying to preserve and live a way of life that enables the horses and humans to be successful together.

Do you have any concerns about the future of horses in this area?

I have concerns. I am concerned about the closure/limitations of historical horse trails that have been re-established to conform to bicyclists. There is enough room for everyone, if planned for all participants. This still is the WEST!

I am concerned about the restrictions that Boulder County government has tried to enforce on agricultural property. We must have horses and horse property to maintain that rural ambiance. These properties are expensive to maintain. They offer the beauty that so many people enjoy everyday on their commute to work, their bicycle rides and hikes. If we can't participate with our horses in this environment, then those properties will no longer be desired by many. Stewardship of the horse community promotes the rural life, beauty and environment that many enjoy. I hope that the County maintains this lifestyle by supporting more positive equine use on the local trails and horse parks.

Horse Lovers at Large CON'T

Amy Bowman

How long have you been in Boulder County?

I have been in Boulder County since 1988. (Yikes! that's 20 years!)

How long have you been involved with horses and in the Boulder County horse community?

My mother used to lead me to nursery school on Girly, the family horse, back in Ridgefield, CT, and I had my first real lesson from a girl named Nell Hart and her pony Gypsy when I was 7. I got my first pony when I was 8 years old.

I've been in the Boulder County horse community for 20 years, having moved a colt I bought to Boulder from Idaho when I was still in college (long story...).

I've had a wide range of experiences with horses in my life. I've competed in Hunter/Jumper for several years, low level Eventing, fox hunting as a child back east and later in life while in Watkins, CO. I did competitive trail riding in Vermont as a teenager. I led a 4-H club in Longmont for several years. But, what I enjoy most is driving in harness and riding side saddle, believe it or not.

How do you enjoy your horses currently?

My participation has basically been on hold for the last 5 years due to a variety of injuries and most recently, a hip operation. Otherwise, I've enjoyed a variety of activities that include teaching and training, trail riding, and a children's day camp held at my place.

Why Boulder County? What do you love about it?

A job brought me to Boulder after I graduated from college. I quite liked all of the outdoor activities around



town. However, Boulder has significantly changed since those days.

Are horses part of your day job?

Horses are a major part of my life. Once I recover, I hope to get back to it!

Do you have any concerns about the future of horses in this area?

My concern for the future includes the frightening degree of growth taking place in this area, along the entire Front Range. I am concerned that "backyard horse keeping" will become a thing of the past in the area. Finding places to ride is getting more and more difficult as the population in this area grows.