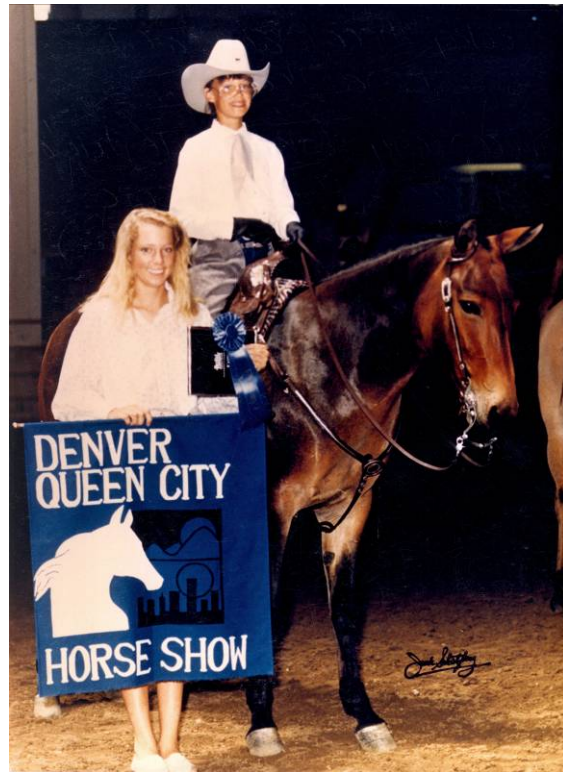


MULE CROSSING: *Queen City Horse Show*

By Meredith Hodges

Only six years ago, mule and donkey shows were nearly non-existent in the state of Colorado. Enthusiastic members of the Rocky Mountain Longears Association saw a need for the promotion of Longears and the education of the public about them, and began sponsoring small shows throughout the state. As the numbers of RMLEA members increased, so increased the demands made upon the club. We began to recognize a need for a specialized club, one that could meet the needs of those who wished to pursue the challenges of the equine performance world. Thus, the Colorado Donkey & Mule Society was born. CDMS has sponsored four shows and several clinics since January of 1987, enabling the Longears equestrians to challenge themselves and their mounts, set goals, and bask in the limelight of their accomplishments. We see what needs to be done to open the doors for mules and donkeys, evaluate our options, and then proceed with the most desirable plan of action.



Until now, mules in Colorado have been showing primarily with the draft horses or on their own, but this year we were cordially invited to put on a show with American Saddlebreds, Morgans, and Tennessee Walkers. How would the mules stack up against these impressive show horses? We weren't really sure, but C.D.M.S. met the challenge with their usual good nature and enthusiasm and put together the Queen City Donkey & Mule Show held in Denver, July 30-August 2, 1987.

Months of preparation went into the show and like any show, there were numerous things to be considered and changes to be made. Every time a change was made, people had to be notified and the mailing list for Longears was more than 400 names. We had hoped to pull in quite a few mules and donkeys, but one major glitch nearly cost us the show. Horse shows, because of their stability and increasing popularity, are able to charge much more for entries, not to mention breed and club fees. When the premium book was released, we found that the mules were charged the same fees as the horses. Two weeks before the show, management conceded to drop a lot of the superfluous fees, however, by that time, it was too late to repair the damage. It is my contention that we might have had a lot more animals show up had the fees been initially reasonable, but this too, is speculation. We are experiencing an economic slump in this country, and people just don't have the extra money to spend on other than their own basic needs. Still, I would like to say that this show did not bomb out. Nineteen people and 23 mules put on a show that was well received by our American show horse co-exhibitors and spectators. We are also especially proud to say that every mule in the show, and donkey too, was well-conditioned, well-

groomed, and well-trained, making for one extraordinarily impressive show. Twenty-three mules and donkeys filled 22 classes, once again reaffirming the true versatility of these incredible animals! Champion Model Donkey went to Blue Zebulon, shown by Fran Howe of the Bitterroot Mule Company in Bennett, Colorado, with Lucky Three's Little Jack Horner taking Reserve Champion. Champion Model Mule was Lucky Three Nuggett, a two-year-old molly mule shown by the Lucky Three Ranch in Loveland, Colorado. Reserve Champion went to Mountain Shadow Mules' Rambling Rose, shown by Diane Walston of Longmont, Colorado. Detailed results can be obtained through the Lucky Three Ranch.

CDMS members and their friends are to be congratulated for all the hard work and dedication it took to make this show as impressive as it was. It was obvious that the several month's preparation was worthwhile. The monthly clinics sponsored by CDMS and attended with enthusiasm had indeed paid off in the show ring; it had made much better riders of us all and quiet, obedient companions of our mounts. We can be especially proud of our youth for their outstanding performances throughout the show. They have probably progressed faster than the adults! Their classes reflected an aura of concentration and determination. These "kids" are serious riders with a serious case of mule fever, and dreams of a bright future for Longears. They will carry mules and donkeys into new challenges and greater recognition. Keep up the good work: Justin GrandPre, Amy Wilfong, Leslie Busque, and Kim Nordyke (Youth Showmanship & Pleasure 14-17); Dena Hodges, Donnie Jo Neal, Cindy Brink, and Crystal Nordyke (Youth Showmanship & Pleasure 13 and under). A special congratulations to Leslie Busque for her first place win in the adult English Pleasure class, and to Kim Nordyke for her beautiful ride to second place in the Ladies Sidesaddle. We are very proud of all of you!

CDMS would like to express their thanks and appreciation to all those directors, managers, exhibitors, and spectators of the Queen City Horse Show committee for extending the invitation to show and for their continued friendly support throughout the show. Special thanks to Tommie Nykanon and Judy McNeish for all their hard work and dedication that resulted in a show filled with classy animals, good sportsmanship, and mutual admiration among exhibitors. This show proved that it doesn't necessarily take members to put on a good show, just dedicated, hard-working individuals and well-kept, well-trained animals. We hope the future will make the Queen City Donkey & Mule Show the crowned jewel of Colorado!

For more information about Meredith Hodges and her comprehensive correspondence training Program, *Training Mules and Donkeys*, please visit www.LuckyThreeRanch.com or call **1-800-816-7566**. Also, find Meredith Hodges and Lucky Three Ranch on Facebook and Twitter. And don't forget to check out her children's website at JasperTheMule.com

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