

# My Arabian can do that!



Dr. Asim Shahzad Malik

By Janet de Acevedo Macdonald

States Tent Pegging Federation, Inc. (USTPF®) as a non-profit organization.

The USTPF is the national governing body for the sport that oversees the safety and welfare of both horses and riders. The organization sees Tent Pegging as an equestrian sport for developing not only the riding skills of interested Americans, especially youth, but also as another career opportunity for horses.

Having established Tent Pegging stateside, Dr. Malik competes with Magic, Rose and Kodi as often as possible. When competing abroad, he was most recently in Oman and Sudan, the host country provides the horses. Asked whether these are ever Arabians, Dr. Malik said sometimes, but in Pakistan and India for instance, countrymen preferred their native-bred horses; the Baluchi in Pakistan and the Marwari in India.

If you were to happen upon a Tent Pegging competition you may think it looks a lot like Polo — that is until the lances and swords begin being brandished. The precision of horse and rider looks like wicked fun; something you might see at a Renaissance festival. One of the oldest sports known to horse riders, Tent Pegging is a mounted game that involves the use of a razor-sharp 2-3 foot sword and a 6-7 foot, metal-tipped lance targeting wooden, wire-wrapped pegs that are one-foot-long, one-inch-thick, and 2.5 inches wide. Originating in India, and also rumored to have kept Alexander the Great's warriors fit, the team competition hones skills of accuracy, speed, and dealing with galloping horses. Tent Pegging is one of only 10 equestrian disciplines officially recognized by the international governing body of equestrian sports, the FEI.

Teams of four compete in a variety of formations — in a row, abreast, or one at a time — and always at a gallop. In addition to “killing the peg,” riders use swords to halve oranges dangled from a gallows structure that looks like the Hangman word game. Yet all formations are done with precision since an out-of-sync horse and weapon-carrying rider can result in injury to one or both.

The Arabian horse excels at Tent Pegging because it meets the preferred height range of 14-14.2 hands, and has the desired endurance capabilities. Tent peggers corroborate what we as Arabian enthusiasts already know: where other breeds have a tendency to tire, the Arabian excels in speed, control, and endurance. Most notably, it takes less training time for an Arabian horse to learn how to successfully gallop straight while confidently carrying a rider flourishing a weapon and running near the gallows, or toward a buried peg.

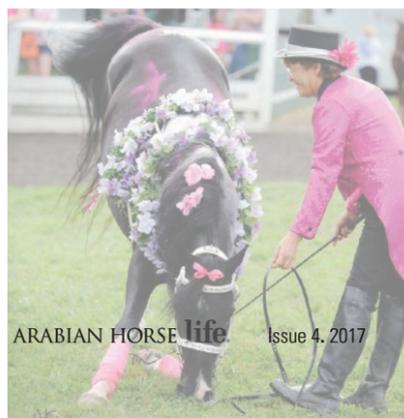
<http://www.ustpf.org/>

## The Little Known Sport of Tent Pegging

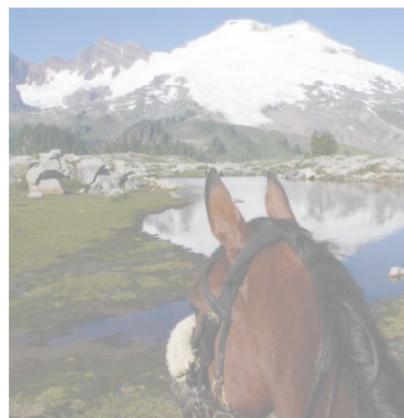
Tent pegging is a childhood passion for Pakistani-born **Dr. Asim Shahzad Malik**. He is the founder, chairman, president and CEO for the United States Tent Pegging Federation, Inc. (USTPF), headquartered in Tulsa, Okla. A naturalized American citizen, Dr. Malik is also an internationally recognized Tent Pegging judge.

In March 2009, Dr. Malik purchased Morsabis Magic (“Magic”), a bay Arabian gelding; and two full siblings Half-Arabian, Pinto/Tennessee Walking Horses, Lace N Roses (“Rose”), a black mare, and Kodiak Ali Bar (“Kodi”), a bay gelding. An experienced, lifelong equestrian, Dr. Malik happily rode his new purchases in both the English and Western disciplines in the Tulsa area. In August 2013, he happened to see an online video about Tent Pegging competitions in Pakistan. This rekindled his childhood dream of being a tent pegger, so he searched for clubs to join in the U.S., but didn't find any. Determined, he worked with the International Tent Pegging Federation (ITPF), and in December 2013, Dr. Malik established the United

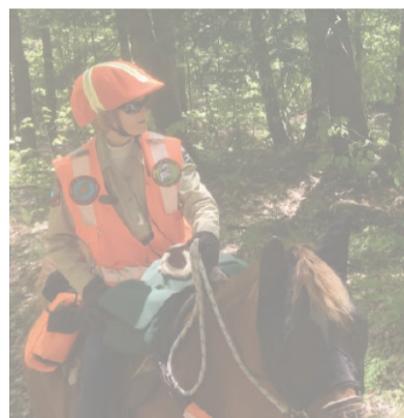
In E.B. White's classic children's book *Charlotte's Web*, Charlotte the spider tells Wilbur the pig that she is versatile. Confused, he asks: “What does ‘versatile’ mean — full of eggs?” “Certainly not,” Charlotte replies. “‘Versatile’ means I can turn with ease from one thing to another.” No doubt, wise Charlotte knows the Arabian horse. She likely would spin the adjectives “varied,” “skilled,” and “mobile,” in her web as well. What follows are just a few of the lesser known ways people spend time with their beloved Arabian horses.



Natasha Douglas of Photos by Nat



Barbara Podaszwick



Cynde Putney

## Search & Rescue

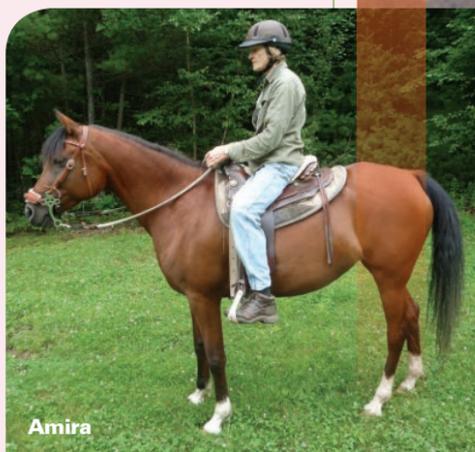
In her reply to AHL's call for versatile Arabian horse tales, **Ellen Ross**, who lives in Waterboro, Maine, writes: "I think that is a great idea to get stories of how we use our Arabs, especially since most of us are not in the show world, but use our mounts otherwise." Ellen's 'otherwise' is with her nineteen-year-old, purebred Egyptian mare, Monietregal Flame, as a certified Maine Mounted Search & Rescue (SAR) horse. "Flame" and Ellen have 11 years of experience together as one of 13 active SAR team members covering the 6,800-plus square miles and 16 counties that are the State of Maine.

Ellen is the training officer for her unit, which is certified under the Maine State Game

Warden's Service and a certified ground searcher. Flame is the only Arabian on the team, and she and Ellen have gone on more searches than any other MMSAR horse and rider team. The volunteer teams search in pairs. Their season starts April 1 and ends whenever the snow accumulation prevents going out, which is usually around Thanksgiving.

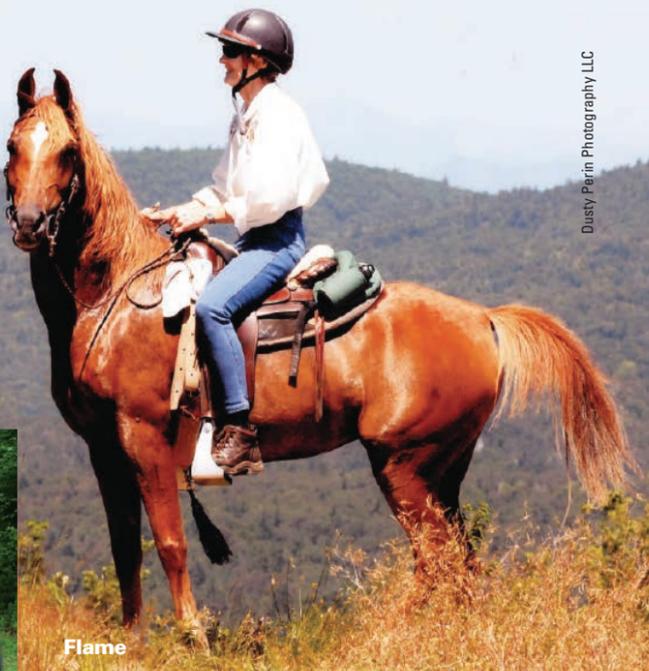
"I have taken her twice looking for a lost hiker on our famous Sugarloaf Mountain (the highest peak of the Rangeley-Stratton mountain range on Maine's Appalachian Trail), climbing its rugged terrain," says Ellen.

Ellen, who is also an avid trail rider, rides Flame two to four hours, five days a week, but SAR work demands much, much more. According to the MMSAR website, a few of the major requirements for Horse Certification include the horse be well-mannered, non-aggressive, calm, and have trail experience. It should be able to pony and be ponied. Not only must an SAR-certified horse stand quietly while tied and on the trailer, in less than 10 minutes it must be able to load into a strange trailer by a strange handler with no input from its owner. A horse team's daylight 10-15 mile ride must be completed in 3-5 hours, and a successful 4-mile night ride must be done in one hour's time. The two must also successfully camp overnight using only items carried on horseback. The horse must work independently from the herd (both to leave and to be left). The rider must mount from ground while horse stands quietly, and the rider must maintain control of his/her horse



Amira

Search & Rescue



Flame

Dusty Peim Photography LLC

around bicycles, ATVs, chainsaws, gunfire, car alarms, sirens, etc.

Last summer, Ellen and Flame trained to search for lost people by "air scenting," a technique taught by Minnesotan Terry Nowacki ([www.airscentinghorse.com](http://www.airscentinghorse.com)),

himself an experienced mounted SAR clinician, mounted crowd security specialist, and professional horse trainer. Nowacki teaches that all Mounted SAR responders should understand that their horses have natural scenting capabilities, and the rider can be taught to recognize its equine sign language. While there are no standards for Equine Air Scenting SAR, Flame excelled in Nowacki's training too. In Maine, SAR dogs are called out to track a missing person's scent at the 'place last seen.' As prey animals that are taller than dogs, and that "scent" differently, the horses scout areas in the next circle out from the place last seen.

Every year, Flame, Ellen and the MMSAR horse team train for new experiences; self-defense on horseback, obstacle exposure, reading horse ears and movements while on a search, clue analysis, and desensitizing to various noises.

For Ellen, the enjoyment of both time together under saddle, and education continues. She is now training her seven-year-old, Crabbet-bred, Amyr Amira ("Amira"). With this younger mare, Ellen focuses on feeling the horse's tension, "reading" her ears on the trail, and noting even the mildest of hesitations. "I've used her 'spookiness' to my advantage." During an afternoon ride, Amira hesitated and would not go forward. Good thing too. She had sensed a moose, which can be dangerous if surprised or if one comes unknowingly between mother and calf. Ellen had sensed nothing, and thankfully all parted ways unharmed.

Ellen thinks back to that encounter and quotes the late Sheila Varian, "I love a beautiful horse, but I love a horse that will look after me." Ellen adds, "Arabian horse owners need to be as smart as their horses, or close to it."

If you get lost in Maine, Ellen and Flame want you to rest assured, like the MMSAR motto states, they'll be "looking out for you."

## All-Around Competitor

Farrier **Barbara Podeszwick** currently lives in the hills due east of San Diego. She and her 1996 purebred Arabian mare, SA Seraphim ("Sera") have been together since 2001. Sera was auction bound and "a complete disaster," according to Barbara. As Barbara pondered what she'd gotten herself into, magically or maybe intuitively on Sera's part, the lightly built, bay mare calmed down overnight.

And settled down nicely she did. Sera's recorded Datasource achievements from 2007-2012 in AHA's Region 5 showcase an enviable versatility of wins and placings in a wide variety of disciplines: Sport Horse Show Hack, Sport Horse Mares in Hand, Mounted Costume, English Show Hack, Country Pleasure Driving, Hunter

Pleasure, Competitive Trail, and Western Pleasure.

Leaving the show ring behind, Sera and Barbara tried team roping skills for fun, then took their partnership on the road — literally — to distance rides like the AERC-sanctioned Biltmore Challenge in Asheville, North Carolina, and whatever tickles their fancy that the Competitive Trail Ride (CTR), and North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC) have to offer.

Married to an active duty U.S. Marine Corps aviator, the family has seen a lot of the country. With their horses in tow, trail riding has always been the go-to constant. Sera is known for her big walk and has surefootedly carried Barbara and travelled the cliffs of the Inner Gorge down to the Phantom Ranch in the Grand Canyon. Then up and out, via the South Kabab Trail, leaving mule teams and tourists in her wake, all done deftly and unblinkingly as Sera navigates selfie sticks and parasols.

Ride along with Sera's Journey on Facebook "The Wonderful Journeys of Sera the Horse and her Friends." [www.facebook.com/SerasJourney/](http://www.facebook.com/SerasJourney/)

## Skijoring

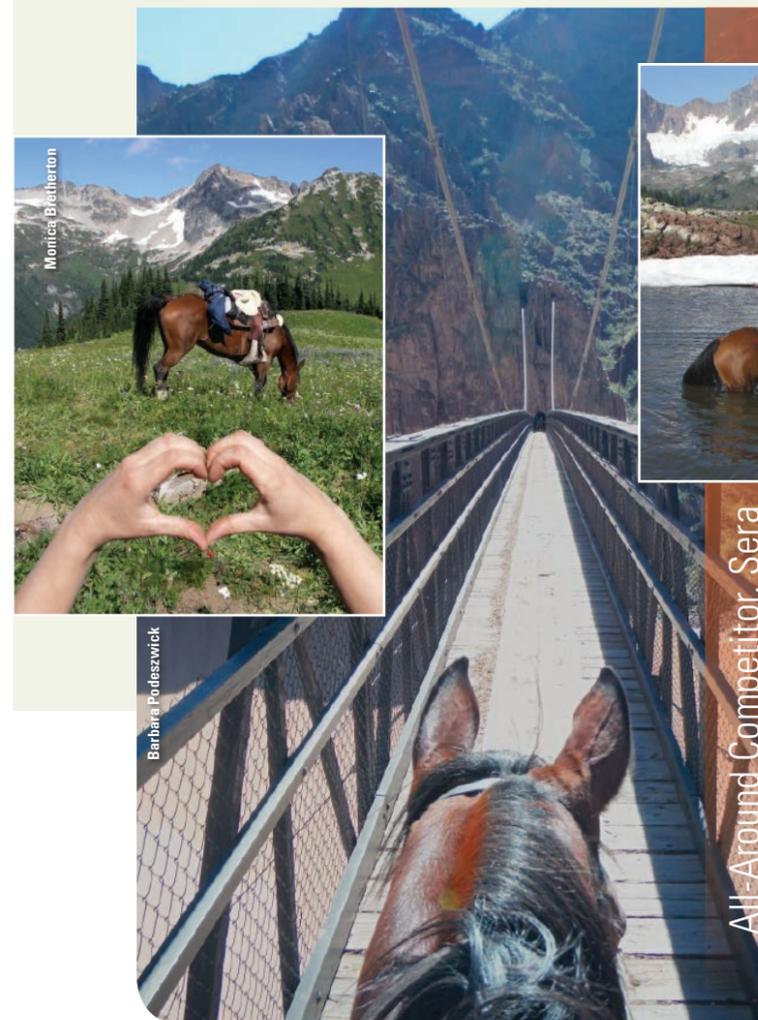
It will come as no surprise that Canadians know how to maximize winter fun. This goes for their horses too.

Meet **Sarah Lyle** and her 2000 grey, purebred Arabian gelding, PA Sebastian, who are avid skijorers.

"Skijoring" comes from a Norwegian word meaning ski driving. It started in Scandinavia as a practical way to get around during the winter and is done with either a dog, multiple dogs, a horse or vehicle. Now it's considered a winter sport, and surely skiing behind a horse must be the most fun! Basically, when a horse is used, it's a rider using one-horse power and long lines to pull a person standing on snow skis — like

a boat pulling a water skier. This is not for the faint of heart, since there's almost always galloping involved, and sometimes there's even a course of jumps. Some skijoring versions have no rider, and the reins threaded back to the skier.

After showing "Sebastian" for four years on the Arabian circuit as a Working Hunter and Jumper, including back-to-back Canadian National Championship Jumper ATR titles in 2010 and 2011, a Reserve National Championship, two Top 10s in Working Hunter, plus regional wins in Third Level Dressage, Sebastian retired from regular showing in 2016. Not one to stand around, it was time for him to try something new.



Monica Bieberton

Barbara Podeszwick

All-Around Competitor, Sera

Sara Franklin

Diane Comeau-Harasimiuk



Skijoring

“Sebastion has a track record of being terrified of pulling things. I’d wanted to show him as a driving horse, but training was a disaster,” says Sarah. “For some reason, he just loves skijoring. He’s ready to go and go again all day!” The two, with a crowd of 10 horse friends, pull people across the white stuff at giggle-generating speeds from January to March when the Alberta snow is at its most plentiful.



Bonnie Heffers

only versatile, we find them to be a loving, clever horses,” says Marieke. When asked what, in addition to patience, turned Roxy around, Marieke shared, “The key to Roxy is giving her something technical to do.”

Diesel and Lexi were five- and eight-years-old respectively when Roxy arrived. The trio have grown up swimming together in summer

and skijoring in winter. She goes bitless and is barefoot or in glue-on Scoot Skins when she and Marieke ride endurance. In fact, Roxy competed in 23 endurance rides over a three-year-period — this includes five 50-mile rides, numerous 25 milers, and some shorter distance rides with Lexi and Diesel, now 15 and 10.

To add adventure to her adaptability, Roxy likes to go along when the family explores unused gold mines and old train tunnels. Not tied up outside, she goes “follow the leader” into the shafts and tunnels. Roxy’s also been known to happily canter unfazed through abandoned tunnels even as trains are passing overhead on active tracks.

Fire doesn’t bother her either. Rob does carnival-style fire breathing while sitting astride and guides Roxy, torch-in-hand, on night rides. They also dabble in horseback archery.

Rob rode Roxy full liberty (no saddle, no bridle) in the Mount Sterling area, near the border between the states of New South Wales and Victoria. Movie lovers will remember this majestic mountain scenery, and the final chase scenes with its awe-inspiring horse ride down the mountainside in the 1982 Australian drama, *The Man from Snowy River*.

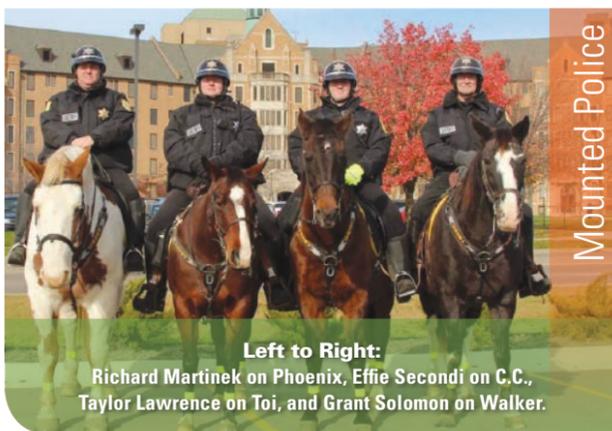
### Mounted Police

“I drooled over him for four years before my amazing opportunity [to own him] came about,” remembers Taylor Lawrence about her 16-hand, 1993 Half-Arabian gelding, The Toi Maker+ (“Toi”). Taylor and Toi are members of the mounted volunteer unit of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department in Michigan.

### Wonder From Down Under

A wonder from Down Under is a fitting way to tee up Rob Featonby’s email to *AHL* about Fairview Ethereal Dream (“Roxy”) as a talented, versatile candidate. This 2006 purebred Arabian chestnut mare, joined the Featonby family — Rob and Marieke with kids: Diesel and Lexi — as a freshly weaned five-month-old from the famous Fairview Arabian Stud in Maryborough, Queensland. For starters, Roxy was not keen on men, and she was basically a wild child. Patiently, Marieke gained her confidence, which planted the seeds for good relationships with Rob and the children. Later Rob and Marieke started Roxy, and she’s been a family horse of many persuasions.

“We are passionate about Arabians. They are not



Mounted Police

Left to Right:  
Richard Martinek on Phoenix, Effie Secondi on C.C.,  
Taylor Lawrence on Toi, and Grant Solomon on Walker.

John Speier

Taylor is a volunteer reserve police officer, and Toi is the only Arabian in the mounted unit. Taylor’s husband and mother also serve 10-15 hours a month in the 20-person mounted division, but they ride Quarter Horses.

And Taylor had reason to drool! Bred at Louisiana’s Live Oak Arabians, Toi’s Datasource achievements start in 1997 as a HA/AA English Pleasure Junior Horse, with Toi finding his niche in 2001 in HA/AA Mounted Native Costume, taking regional Top Fives, followed by Youth National and Canadian National Top 10s in 2002, and 2006, with many regional titles in between.

And now he and Taylor proudly, happily, and efficiently represent law enforcement in Kalamazoo County, the

ninth largest county in the state. As cited in part on the Kalamazoo County Sheriff Mounted Division Facebook page, “The mounted division continues the grand tradition of the ‘Old West’ by providing horse mounted, volunteer law enforcement services to the Sheriff’s Department. Horses are highly visible to the public, very mobile, and make it much easier for the

rider to see in crowds and parking lots. Most people feel safer knowing a mounted Sheriff’s Deputy is on duty.” [www.facebook.com/Kalamazoo-County-Sheriff-Mounted-Division-116054098437734/](http://www.facebook.com/Kalamazoo-County-Sheriff-Mounted-Division-116054098437734/)

### A Storybook Horse

Jan Sharp lives in Ashtabula, Ohio with her Half-Arabian pinto horses. She has been showing AOTS for 52 years, and bred Darker N Bey+, her 2005 black tobiano gelding she calls “Darken.” They’ve been showing dressage together — both Western and Classic — since 2011, but it wasn’t always a piece of cake with Darken. Jan freely admits she thought he was a dunderhead.

“I couldn’t get him to do anything, and he was afraid of everything,” says Jan, “I wasn’t sure if he was stupid or what. But I trust my breeding program, and I gave him time.”

And time was what Darken needed. Jan continues, “At two, he’d taught himself tricks by watching what I was teaching other horses. He came out of his stall to show me that he too could bow, sit, lay down, rumba, and march.”

So impressed with what she was learning from Darken, Jan wrote the first of two books, *Darken, The Scaredy-Cat Champion* in 2013 covering his first five years, and its newly published 2017 companion, *Darken: In Good Company*.

“I was rewarded by watching him blossom. Along the way I learned it’s the little steps and victories in life that should be savored, instead of hurrying past in an attempt to reach greater goals,” notes Jan.



Marieke Featonby



Marieke Featonby



Marieke Featonby



Roxy, the Wonder from Down Under

Marieke Featonby

A Story Book Horse



Natasha Douglas of Photos by Nat

This year she and Darken are showing Western Dressage, and First and Second Level Dressage at Sport Horse Nationals in Raleigh. If you're attending the show, bring a copy of the book to have it signed, and come for a selfie with Darken.

Speed Events

Record-breaking, low-to-the-ground speedster is one way to describe 13-year-old Echo My Dreams ("Sunny"). This ragin' Cajun and her 12-year-old rider, **Layla Chandler**, race around barrels and bend poles besting many in their local Cajun Little Britches Rodeo Association in Alexandria, Louisiana. Mother, JoAnn Chandler, says she bought Sunny at age six for then five-year-old Layla.

"Oh, and did I hear it," says JoAnn. "You bought an ARAB for your child?!!!" Admittedly, Sunny, a shiny black, Half-Arabian/Morgan cross mare, was the first of

her breed to join their Quarter Horse and Thoroughbred herd. "She's the most honest horse. Sunny never sours, and always gives 125 percent to Layla every time she rides."

At 14.1 hands, Sunny's gait is fast, efficient and "floaty," which is quite a departure from the thunder of her hard-charging competitors. With 21-second times, Sunny and Layla have once again qualified for Junior Girl Pole Bending at the Little Britches national show. Their 15.5-second barrel times are excellent as well. To date, they've garnered 18 buckles for their efforts and have their eyes on an award saddle at year's end. And all this after Sunny snapped a small bone in one of her rear legs in 2016. She had surgery in December to remove it, and was on two months of stall rest.

"She's not good with standing around. Sunny needs a job," said JoAnn, "Thankfully, she's come back stronger than ever."

The duo show year-round in Halter as well as games. With a breed ambassador like Sunny, it's not surprising to learn JoAnn is keeping her eye out for other Arabians to own and show.

[www.facebook.com/CajunLBR/](http://www.facebook.com/CajunLBR/)

In the End

We all know Arabians are versatile, but kudos to all the people doing what they love with their Arabians. In addition to schooling Wilbur about what it means to be versatile, Charlotte the spider also shared heart-felt sentiments about relationships, like the ones told here.

"You've been my friend," replied Charlotte. "That in itself is a tremendous thing." 🌱

*Janet de Acevedo Macdonald is executive producer for America's number one travel radio show, "Rudy Maxa's World with The Careys." She is co-owner of U.S. National Champion stallion, Legacys Renoir+. She lives in southeastern Arizona with her husband, horses, and dogs on their very own Auld Macdonald Farm.*



Speed Events with Sunny

Alisha V Photography