

## CRTWH CENTURY PARTNERS 2015

### **NATALIE SPECKMAIER and her mare, 'TRIGGER' (aka Uphill Dusty Gold)**

I am very pleased to nominate NATALIE SPECKMAIER and her mare, 'TRIGGER' (aka Uphill Dusty Gold) as Century Partners as of this spring, 2015.

Natalie contacted us at Uphill Farm back in 2000, hoping to find a palomino from the Allen's Gold Zephyr 431975 line. As a child she'd been a big fan of Roy Rogers and already owned a palomino gelding, My Pal Trigger. So she was thrilled to discover that Uphill Dusty Gold was indeed a descendant.

Natalie and 'My Gal Trigger' have been partners now for 15 years, and have ridden the beaches and mountain park trails around Vancouver, BC. We wish them all the best as their partnership continues on past the century mark.

*Marjorie Lacy*

*Here is their story as told by Natalie.*



*"Trigger and I qualify for the CRTWH Century Partners designation! How did that happen?*

*I don't feel a day over 10, when I desperately wanted to be Roy Rogers.*

*Never managed that, but I do have a descendant of his trick horse, don't I? My friend calls me Roy, or RR for short. Her nickname is LR as she was a Lone Ranger fan when she was a horse crazy girl.*

*Well, we still are - horse crazy, that is. Is there any other way?"*

## Century Partners 2015

### NATALIE SPECKMAIER & TRIGGER (aka UPHILL DUSTY GOLD)

My mother claimed that I had a pencil in my hand as soon as I could sit up. What did I draw? Horses, of course. They were the love of my life and when we moved from our Albion farm (how I wish I had it now!) to Coleman, Alberta and on to Drumheller, I discovered my true love. Who *didn't* love him? Why, Trigger, of course, the smartest horse in the movies, and his side kick, Roy Rogers. Many hours were spent in the Drumheller hills playing cowboys, and there was an ongoing battle over who would be Roy, thereby having control of Trigger. Even the loser didn't want to be Dale Evans (a girl!) and ride *Buttermilk*? Better to play the bad guy than settle for that, we all decided.

Years passed, we grew up, scattered, married, had & raised children, and then the dreaming began. It became reality on an acreage in Sherwood Park with a couple of nasty, untrained horses owned by a relative. Rather than invite personal injury or death, I chose to take riding lessons from a German dressage instructor. He was training his daughter, Leisl and her horse, Stormy, for the 1972 Olympics.

This was in the late 60s. I was lucky enough to have Stormy as my lesson horse. Herr Kohlschein was an excellent instructor (he carried a BIG vip!) and I learned a lot. But I didn't make it to the Olympics, and I don't know if Leisl did. Her name wasn't among the winners and I hadn't watched the events.

Shortly thereafter we moved to Vancouver, but the horse fever never left me. An acreage was out of the question as an acre there was equal to the price we'd received for our 40. Instead we settled for a house in Tsawwassen, and then bought a delightful pinto mare, Shawnee, for our two girls. (Our son was allergic so gazed at her from afar.) We kept Shawnee

across the line in Point Roberts. As she was for our girls, the only time I rode her was when I test rode her at the North Shore dude string where we bought her.

Shawnee turned out to be a wonderful riding buddy for the girls. I was content just interacting with her when she was brought to the house to share peanut butter sandwiches with the girls. I wish I had a video of those times. Hilarious!

However my horse fever came to a boil when our daughter, Nicole, and her husband bought an acreage in Langley... and Nicole had two Standardbred mares given to her... and then bought a Tennessee Walker! The hunt was on for a Trigger for mother! Nicole spotted a 'for sale' ad by Debbie Smith for a palomino gelding. Unfortunately, he was sold. But wait - he was returned, as he hated ring

work and that's what the buyer had wanted from him. So Pal became My Pal Trigger by default. I loved my Pal, who was a kind, gentle three-fourths quarter horse, one-fourth Arab, a beauty, with a jog you could sit all day, and a comfortable lope.

Ah, but something told me I shouldn't

rest until I realized my dream of becoming King of the Cowboys, or at least of having a Trigger of my own. The search was launched once again, and victory was at hand when Nicole came into possession of a pile of old *WHN* issues from Pat Warnock, a past Walker owner.

I wondered if the magazine was still publishing and sent a letter (yes, a letter, with postage and everything) to the publisher, Marjorie Lacy. I told her how I'd acquired the magazines and how much I'd enjoyed reading them. I also mentioned that my dream was to own a descendant of Roy Rogers' trick horse, Trigger, Jr. (Allen's Gold Zephyr).



**Sometimes dreams do come true...**

*Painting by Mike Barker*



I was surprised and delighted to receive a prompt reply saying that the magazine was alive and well and... (drum roll here) that Uphill Farm was the keeper of the golden genes!! Not only that, but a picture of a gorgeous palomino mare, Uphill Dusty Gold, a descendant of Trigger Jr., followed. I believe I swooned at this point. Therein followed more correspondence (on paper, in envelopes, with stamps and everything) and plans were made for us, daughter Nicole and I, to motor to Edson (I'd never heard of it) to view the horse of my dreams. There was a bonus – she had an 18 month old filly at her side, the rascal still making sneaky attempts to nurse. Marjorie would sell one of them. Oh, be still my heart!

Nicole and I arrived in Edson one fine morning and found Uphill Farm with its lovely log house. Marjorie and Charles made us feel right at home by feeding us lunch. We had a tour of the house they'd built themselves, and viewed Charles' excellent wildlife art. The meet and greet with the herd in the pasture was a highlight, all being friendly and curious. Punkin, Uphill Dusty Gold's barn name, and her 18 month old baby, Penny, stood out from the crowd, shining like gold and adorned with white manes and tails.

Marjorie saddled up Punkin, and Nicole and I each took a turn in a paddock. We were impressed with how calm and responsive this lovely horse was. Some more time was spent talking and considering which horse, Punkin or Penny, would be the better choice, and then it was time to go. All the way home we discussed the pros and cons and decided that although Penny had youth on her side, it would be some time before I would have a riding horse. So by the time we got home, Punkin was the logical choice. In the meantime, Marjorie was agonizing as well and came to the same conclusion.

A letter (large brown envelope, stamps & everything) from Marjorie was delivered to the wrong address so I was unaware of what *she* had decided. It was all sorted out eventually with a phone call and the deal was made. Uphill Dusty Gold (already 'Trigger' in my mind) was mine! I ordered horse transport that was to arrive at a certain time at Uphill Farm but instead arrived earlier than planned. Luckily the vet was doing the vet check just as the transport arrived, so it all worked out. Trigger arrived in good condition and looked like she had done this a number of times (Not!) as there was only curiosity, not fear. She took in stride (so to speak) the excitement of her arrival with a swarm of kids, dogs, horses and people. She settled into her stall in the barn as soon as she spotted the hay rack. The rest is history.

My Gal Trigger and I have had many an adventure in our 15 years together. She's had 4 different homes due to land sales, and is very happy where she is now. We've ridden the trails in Campbell Valley in Langley, the excellent trails in Maple Ridge, and even on English Bay beach and in Stanley Park with the Vancouver Mounted Police for a fund raiser. Another fund raiser was for Haney Horsemen at Lisa Reidler's family farm by 100 Mile House. Lisa is another TWH owner.

We've also participated in Parelli and Jonathan Field clinics, spent time with Bill Roy for horse and rider training, and participated in a Dianne Little / Bill Roy clinic at daughter Nicole's place in Langley.







Trigger continues to be a favourite at any barn she's lived in as she gets along with everyone, horse or human. She has lovely manners and no vices, which is a reflection of her bloodlines and the expertise of her breeders. And now that she's of a certain age (don't ask, as she won't tell) she no longer chases after the boys. Her vet says she is his favourite of all his patients, even his own horses, and she loves him in return. She has a better medical plan than I do and gets two complete physicals every year.

Now that she's older she has arthritis, so we're just two old gals doing what we can. I, for one, am so looking forward to hitting the trails again, once I get the go-ahead from my chiropractor, and I know that this is what Trigger loves best. A friend takes her out every week or two and once a week she gets lunged by her landlady. Gotta keep those old joints moving!

I hope that Trigger and I have many more years together and I can smugly say to my childhood friend, Peggy: "Ha ha! I get to be Roy Rogers *all the time* now!"



Trigger was 23 on her last birthday, March 28, 2015, but don't tell her I told you. And on my last birthday on May 23<sup>rd</sup>? You do the math, I'm not helping!

Happy Trails to You...



