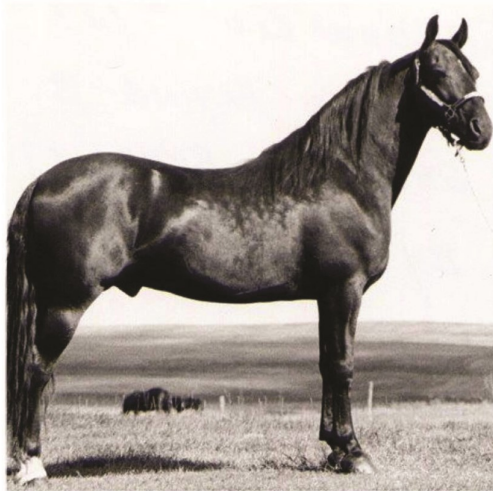




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# *Walking*



# *Horse News*

DEDICATED TO THE PLAIN - SHOD TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE SINCE 1977

## Respect the Past to Protect the Future

By Dianne Little

In 1981, a high school friend's husband purchased a Tennessee Walking Horse to use in field trials. She invited me to take riding lessons with her. At the first lesson, my mother's warnings of getting hurt overrode all my feelings of joy and I spent the lesson terrified. The idea of picking up those feet was a mental as well as physical challenge. I was relieved when the first lesson was over and was not sure I would return.

But return I did. There is no doubt that the passion and patience of the instructor, the atmosphere at the barn, and my stubbornness were the deciding factors in my decision. The dream overrode the terror. The influence of Helen B. Williamson, owner of Westridge Farms and Diane Sept the trainer and instructor injected me with their love for the Tennessee Walking Horse. Within four months I purchased a Tennessee Walking Horse and brought him to board at Westridge Farms. From that day forward, my life was entwined with that of Helen and Diane. This journey continues today even though Helen is deceased and Diane lives in the United States.

In 1981, Helen Williamson, Claudia and Hilton Hack, Marlin and Henry Matechuk, Diane Sept, Larry Malick, Sue Marsland and Doris Long founded the Canadian Walking Horse Association. The new Association was incorporated under the Animal Pedigree Act. In accordance with the Act, the Association became the representative of the Tennessee Walking Horse in Canada and was responsible for registering purebred Tennessee Walking Horses in Canada. Today, this Association is the Canadian Registry of the Tennessee Walking Horse. It was through the example of, and encouragement from, Helen that I became involved and joined the Board in 1984.

Helen Williamson was an unique individual. Her love of the TWH and of all things equine was evident. Her passion for the ethical treatment of all animals was well known in the horse world. I was privileged to ride weekday mornings, arriving in time for coffee or tea and discussion of all things equine. No subject was too hot as we were anxious to express our perspectives. I was challenged and invigorated to move forward in my journey.

Helen was a woman of vision. She recognized that the future was rooted in the past, and growth would

depend upon the lessons learned from the past. Not only did Helen recognize the problems of the TWH in the United States, but she actively fought to ensure that the TWH in Canada would not face the same levels of abuse. Helen was a breeder and stood two stallions: Go Shadow Go bred by Pearl Tompkins of Montana and Shaker's Royal Heir imported in utero. Not everyone would agree with Helen's breeding decisions, but everyone respected her dedication to improve the breed.



Frozen Semen has been used with cattle for over 100 years, but was introduced into the equine world about 50 years ago. When Helen became aware that semen could be successfully frozen, she investigated and decided to collect and freeze from both stallions. There were and continue to be problems associated with frozen semen: not all stallions have semen that will freeze successfully, conception rates for AI with frozen semen are a little lower, the process to freeze semen is expensive, and there is an ongoing cost of storing the semen. In 1981 most registries would not register foals from frozen semen or AI out of herd.

None of these factors deterred Helen – she believed in the genetics at Westridge Farms and believed they



should be kept for future use. Semen was collected from both stallions in 1981 and 1984. About the same time, Dr. Taylor of Montana collected semen from Shadow Mountain and Pride's Black Shadow. Rick Weis of Montana currently has this semen in his



possession. Hilton Hack of Calta Stables and a founding member of CRTWH owns frozen semen from his stallions Calta Midnight Victory and Calta Caligula. To the best of my knowledge these were the first collections of semen from Tennessee Walking Horses to be frozen, and the first to be recognized by CRTWH and TWHBEA.

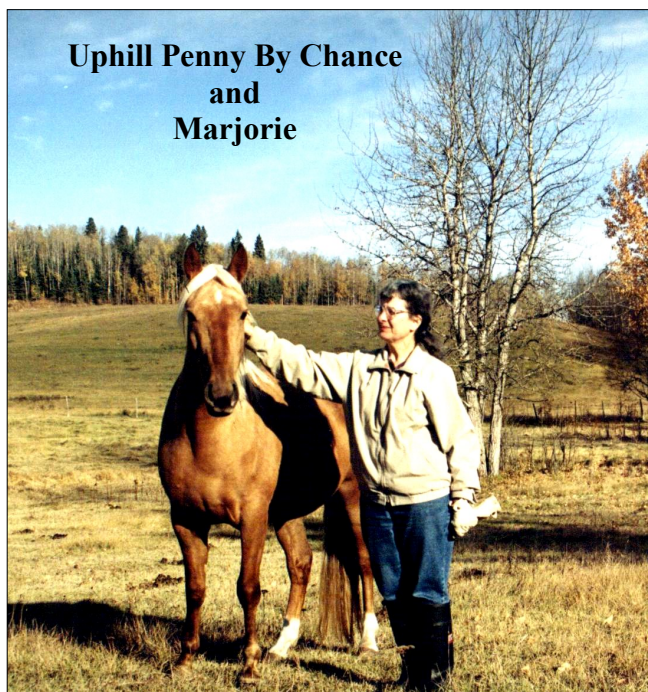
I have been a member of the Westridge Farm family since 1981. In April of 2014, Carol Hall, Helen's daughter, approached me on behalf of the Williamson family regarding the semen that had been in storage since 1981. It had been used 11 years previously and in 2004, the last foal by Go Shadow Go was born. The family did not know if it was still viable or of any use in the TWH world. I believed the semen was viable and was of value. During the CLRC annual meeting in Calgary, mention was made of the Canadian Animal Genetic Resource Program. This program was collecting, storing and protecting older Canadian genetics of crops and livestock. I contacted the Director of the Program to see if they were interested in this semen. The response was positive – yes, they would like to have the semen. At this time we did not know how many straws were available or if the semen was viable. I decided to become an active participant in proving the semen.

### **MY JOURNEY - BECOMING A BREEDER**

When Carol and I discussed the frozen semen, I was determined that it be used in a manner that Helen would approve. I believed it should be used as a tribute to Helen and her vision. I considered Helen's values and those of Pearl Tompkins, the breeder of Go Shadow Go. They believed in thoughtful breeding for temperament and movement. They knew what they wanted and chose the bloodlines carefully to result in a foal that they hoped would be an improvement upon both sire and dam. Helen and Pearl had the greatest respect for Marjorie Lacy. Helen, Pearl and Marjorie maintained a friendship and shared values. Not only did Marjorie breed with thoughtful consideration, but her determination and tenacity in the production of *Walking Horse News* was proof of her belief in the Flat Shod TWH. I concluded that Helen and Pearl would be honored if a foal was the result of the breeding philosophies of Marjorie and Helen, two women who put the horse first and influenced the TWH in Canada.

Once I determined that the frozen semen would be used with a mare bred at Uphill Farm, I decided I should be the person who tested the viability of the semen. I looked for a potential mare, overlooking the fact that I already owned a potential mare, Uphill

Penny By Chance. Penny was a maiden mare and because of her age (15) was not considered the best candidate for successful breeding. I realize many people do not consider 15 too old for breeding but in the world of frozen semen, it is not the optimum age. The only way to find out for certain was a reproductive examination of the mare. I contacted Dr. Cris Berezowski at Moore Equine Reproductive Centre and arranged for the assessment on May 18, 2014. Penny was examined and found to be in good health with no problems that should affect pregnancy. I decided to continue the journey to determine if the semen was viable.



With the help of my good friend Leslie Hunchuk, Penny visited the reproductive centre clinic three times over the next month. When conditions were right, Penny stayed at the clinic and was inseminated on June 6. The next few weeks were full of trepidation and excitement in equal measure. We returned to the clinic July 18 for another ultrasound. To our shock and delight, we were able to view the embryo – Penny was successfully in foal after one breeding. The frozen semen was viable. We returned to Westridge with exciting news for the Williamson family.

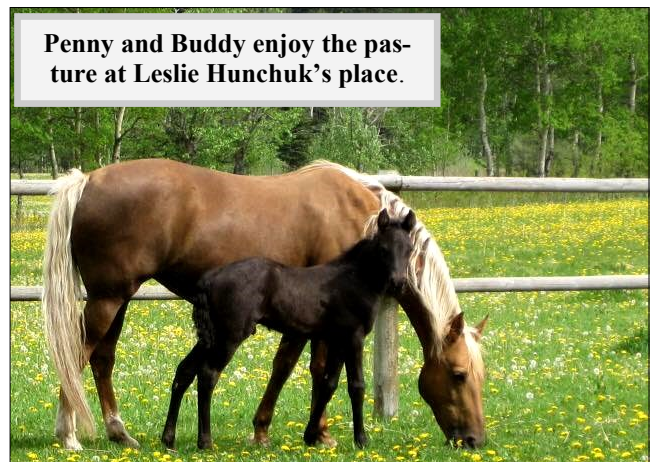
Although I had been optimistic about the viability of the semen, I wanted confirmation of the pregnancy so Penny returned to the clinic in September for further proof of pregnancy. Once again to our shock and delight, Penny was still in foal. It was time for secret celebration. For the next few months, Penny was

treated as mothers-to-be were always treated at Westridge Farms. As time passed, it became increasingly difficult to keep the secret of the pregnancy.

Penny's due date was May 13, a date close to the CRTWH clinic and Annual Meeting. I remembered that Helen believed that most of the Westridge foals were born under the influence of the full moon. After checking moon positions (and Leslie's and my schedules) I decided it would be wise for foaling to occur at the Moore Reproduction Centre. Penny arrived at the maternity ward on May 4. On May 9, between 2 and 3 am, a small, very black colt was born. As members of the CRTWH Board, Leslie and I were both at the clinic and AGM. I believe it was significant that the foal was born on the same day as the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Registry of the Tennessee Walking Horse. The semen was collected in the same year the Registry was incorporated. The semen frozen 34 years previously was proven viable on the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Registry. How fitting, and a tribute to one of the founding members. Maybe the full moon was Helen's smile.



Although a healthy foal was the desired result, I had secretly wished for a filly I could name Hanna. That was a term of endearment used for her by Helen's grandchildren. When I first saw the foal, all I could think of was 'George', the name of my black standard poodle because they were about the same size! The foal is now called Buddy, the grandchildren's name for their Grampa, Ron Williamson. The name suits. I have not determined a registered name, but have many suggestions, all of which are appropriate for this special foal.



Every foal is special and precious. Using semen frozen 34 years ago to create a new life is extra special, but so are the genetics of Go Shadow Go and Uphill Penny By Chance. The impregnation of an older maiden mare with 34 year old frozen semen was a gamble, but the result was a foal that proves the viability of that specific frozen semen. Buddy carries genes from both sire and dam. It makes me smile to watch him mature and play. I never expected to be a breeder, but Buddy proves that I am. The breeding strategies and philosophies of Helen Williamson and Marjorie Lacy are combined in Buddy. Like all breeders, I hope that he fulfills the dreams of breeders everywhere.

Helen died 15 years ago, but her influence continues. There are still TWH at Westridge Farms. As long as I own a TWH, it will be boarded at Westridge Farms. Ron her husband, Carol her daughter, and Sarah her granddaughter ensure that the philosophy at Westridge Farms puts the welfare of the horse first – the principles that Helen established are not compromised. The Canadian Registry of the Tennessee Walking Horse continues to demonstrate the philosophy of the founders, to register horses with integrity and accuracy and develop programs that educate and benefit breeders and owners. Helen's influence on the TWH in Canada continues today. Helen's vision and foresight will continue to influence the TWH in Canada through the use of semen from Go Shadow Go collected in 1981. The semen has been proven viable after 34 years of storage. In 2014, 181 straws were donated by the Williamson Family to the Canadian Animal Genetic Resource Program. It will be stored and available for use in times of national disaster, or times when it is deemed necessary to infuse older bloodlines into the TWH in Canada.

Thank you, Helen,  
for Respecting the Past to Influence the Future.



A woman with short white hair is smiling while sitting on a dark brown horse. She is wearing a light purple or lavender riding suit, a white hat with a black band, and a red bow tie. She is holding a small, light-colored book or tablet in her lap. The horse is standing in a grassy field with trees and a wooden fence in the background.

*I never imagined the depth of the journey I would begin with my introduction to the Tennessee Walking Horse, Westridge Farms, Helen Williamson, Diane Sept and Marjorie Lacy. These women have never been deterred from the ethical path of honesty and integrity. I could never have imagined the satisfaction I have gained from my involvement with the Tennessee Walking Horse.*

*Dianne Little*

# GO SHADOW GO

GO SHADOW GO, the only one of his kind  
is the result of fine double line breeding  
from World Champions and the Foundation  
stock — MERRY BOY LINE. All his foals  
have his stamp, his incomparable gentle  
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**Vedgier**

Sire	Dam	Date of Birth	Color	Sex	Registration No.	Owner
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12345	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12346	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12347	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12348	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12349	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12350	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12351	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12352	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12353	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12354	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12355	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12356	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12357	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12358	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12359	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12360	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12361	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12362	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12363	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12364	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12365	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12366	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12367	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12368	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12369	Larry Malick
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GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12372	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12373	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12374	Helen Williamson
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GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12378	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12379	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12380	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12381	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12382	Helen Williamson
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GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12393	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12394	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12395	Larry Malick
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GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12397	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12398	Helen Williamson
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12399	Larry Malick
GO SHADOW GO	MERRY BOY LINE	1978	Bay	Stallion	12400	Helen Williamson

**Black Tennessee Walking Horse Stallion**  
Markings: Both hind fetlocks & star



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