

## *A Horse to Remember*

### **‘TOPAZ MERRY GO’ 1993 to 2014**

by Bill Howes

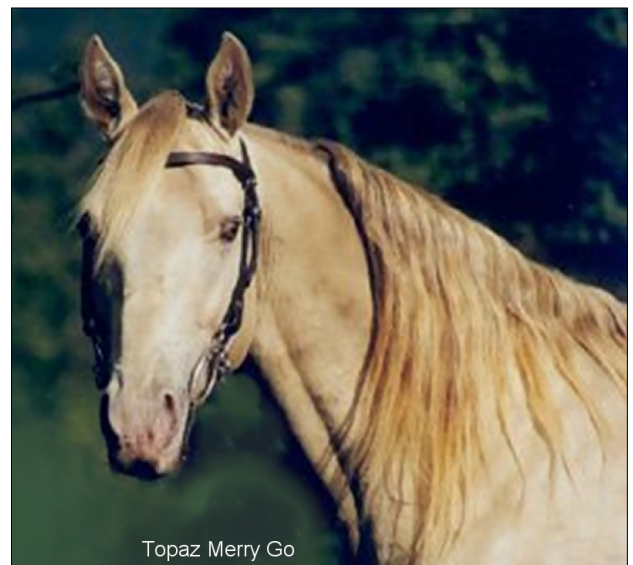
On a stormy day in January 1994, Janis Cook and I travelled to Wildwood, Alberta. She had learned that Susanne Bailey had a TWH foal that they wanted to sell. He was still running with his dam. His bloodlines were of interest to me, although his name was more impressive: TOPAZ MERRY GO! He was out of a (supposedly) palomino mare by a buckskin stud. The price was \$400.00

The mare, foal and a black gelding were rounded up into a corral with skidoos. Though it was not a nice January day, I recall I was wearing running shoes. I managed to get a web halter on the then nine-month old foal for his first time, hooked two lead shanks to the sides of the halter, and out the gate we went. Janis was soon in the snow behind us and I plough-steered him to the rear of the trailer some distance away. It was fairly uneventful to get him into the four-horse trailer alone but he was all sweated up by then. We went to the local convenience store, bought some safety pins and pinned blankets on him, right to his ears. My check was written, papers were exchanged, and off we went.

The worried young colt was weaned and almost halter broke that cold January day. His papers indicated his colour as ‘blond claybank’, a term totally foreign to me. At the time of his purchase, we considered him to be perhaps ‘albino’ or ‘cremello’.

Some days later, back home at Walking Horse Junction east of Ardrossan, Alberta, I was met in the barn area by this same young guy, sporting his web halter and about 1 ½ feet of tattered halter shank. He had been in a tie-stall since breakfast and I guess he had ‘other plans’.

I got out my ‘girth’ rope, tied him to the top railing in a corner of my 2 7/8 metal tubing fence and proceeded with a lesson on sacking out that I had studied many times in my decades old ‘Professor Jesse Beery’ horse training books. I had purchased them as an 11 year old, back in 1952, from a Winnipeg Free Press advertisement. (My grand-father, John Shore Howes, had died in 1950. At the passing of my aunt Vi, some 30 years later, by his wishes I was presented with a set of the very same Professor Jesse Beery training books that he had owned because I was the only ‘horse-person’ grandchild in the entire Howes family.)



After an hour or so of Prof Beery's lessons, he was standing quietly with the half inch polypropylene girth rope in a loop close behind his elbows and over the withers. From the slip-knot between his front legs, the end was run up through the halter and tied as high as possible (in ideal situations that should be about his eye level) to limit his ability to halter-pull and to push back with his front feet against the girth loop. Because the halter is not secured, the pull is entirely on his chest and squeezes the air from him and encourages his forward movement to re-

lease the pressure. There was a shank tied loosely to the lower rail, as back-up if the girth rope failed to stay in position, and tied lower to prevent his climbing over the top rail. He was standing on a very cold, slippery and noisy, clear plastic sheet. He had been introduced to a 4" diameter black 'snake' crawling all over him (weeping tile hose) as well as a very noisy garbage can lid. Ropes had been introduced around his fore and rear legs, between and around in every conceivable direction. He was draped in plastic and was standing quietly enough that I was able to stand a five-gallon bucket upside down on his back and take his picture.

He became a very obedient youngster with the best of manners. During spring break-up from the rigs, I had gotten into hauling horses for other horse owners. Topaz went everywhere with me. Unbeknownst to me, a mistake was 'in the making'. Later that summer Janis took him away to a clinic in a two-horse trailer; on arrival they couldn't back him out as he had got in the habit of jumping out frontwards from the bigger trailer. I had not yet taught him to back out.

As I had been showing horses at the Alberta Horse Improvement Program (AB H.I.P.) since first going to Spruce Meadows, in 1982 I believe, I worked on his halter training and ground-driving and was amazed at his 18" plus overstride on our paved driveway. I felt I had a horse worth showing so we prepared for the annual HIP Show, in Red Deer in that year, 1994. Imagine my surprise when we came away with first place over 21 other Alberta yearlings.

He didn't do much, as I recall, as a spring two-year-old. I did teach him to ground drive and was on his back, bareback, a couple of times. Janis had arranged a Pat



Parelli Clinic with Larry Stewart from Armstrong B.C. as the clinician. Then she got a chance to ride along with a Hunter/Jumper lady who was taking her horse from Edmonton to Toronto for try-outs for the Olympics that were coming up in 1997. So that left me to take care of the final arrangements for the clinic. When I discovered through Larry's agent that there were no dollars forthcoming from the clinic to the stable owner, other than \$25 per person as an auditing fee, some friction was created. That for sure should at least cover the expense of the Port-A-Potty I had hired!

Janis had arrived home the evening before and was anxious to show Topaz the next day in the clinic. While doing a maneuver where they had to get 'in the face' of the horse to make him back away, Topaz reared up and put his ears back at Janis and the clinician, Larry Stewart. Larry then took it upon himself to give a long-winded speech about putting young stallions in clinics when they're not ready. At the end of the clinic I told him I wanted to ride Topaz before the horse left the outdoor ring. "Not with me in here, you're not!" he said. As we were near the side walk-through gate, I indicated for him to leave. I jumped on Topaz bare-back and walked and run-walked him around the 70' X 160' riding ring. At first, he laid his ears back at me and for that he got both heels, hard. His ears perked up and off we went. I slid off and welcomed a small bit of applause from my club member friends. Upon turning Topaz out to his adjacent pasture, he took about ten steps, squared up and had a great big pee. So much for 'unruly' and bad-mannered stud colts.

Topaz Merry Go returned to the Red Deer HIP Show later in the year and once again came out at the top of the two-year old class. With a combination of his winning points from the previous year, he was designated a 'Supreme' example of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed, under a three-judge system.

We were presented with a plaque and a 'stall plate'. Somehow, I've managed to lose both over





the years, but I have one picture that shows the plaque. I can always be corrected but I do not believe that any other TWH yearling and two-year old colt ever surpassed Topaz's winnings at the Horse Improvement Program show. (Left)

Topaz was hauled from the HIP Show at Red Deer, AB to Quesnel, BC for training with Cindy Botkin. Cindy had trained for Deb & Wayne Jack at Armstrong, B.C. and Carseland, AB. as

well as for Roberta Brebner at Williams Lake, BC.

Cindy was not impressed by his lack of overstride. She had him there a couple of months. She felt he should be gelded rather than be 'retained' as a breeding stallion.

The summer of '96 arrangements were made and Topaz was moved to Innocents' Laurindale Stables at Rosalind, Alberta. The next spring, 1997, \*Brenda Baker of Millarville, AB, bought a red chestnut mare, "She's Got



Topaz and Cindy in Quesnel

The Rythum Dec', from Innocents and bred her to Topaz to produce a 'Classic Champagne' filly, 'Holy Smokes', (now a retired family horse after many years as Dave Baker's mountain horse). In 1998, Brenda brought that red mare back to Topaz's court, to produce a trim black gelding 'Black Jack'. (Now owned by Bill Unrau of Grand Prairie). The very same summer Brenda brought 'Jester's Snappy Lil', an old style TWH, to amuse Topaz and produced a big chestnut gelding, 'Flashback', (the treasured mount of Ed Arneson of Cochrane for many years before his death). Also brought to Topaz that same year was Brenda's very sweet natured 'Chicklette', who produced a small refined chestnut mare 'Trinkette', (a very spirited saddle horse for a spirited older lady, Charis Cooper of Turner Valley). Also while at Laurindale, he sired his exact likeness, Cee Dee's Canadian Topaz for Winston & Donna Curtis at Winfield, AB and another colt 'Starry Knight' for Jacqueline Curtis of Edmonton. However in the spring of '98, due to my work commitments out of town and a new marital situation, Topaz was moved to Bev Skowronski's Shady Lane Acres at Ardrossan, AB.





At Bev's he sired a fine colt, Topaz Vintage Stardust (Vinny), very much his likeness, and Mystical Kokomo, both champagnes, now owned, along with Cee Dee Kit's Handsome, a gold champagne, by Len Torgerson & family at Stony Plain, AB. Diane McCannel of Wizard Lake, purchased a son, 'Topaz Sundance', a palomino colt from Bev. 'Dusty' (Topaz Sundown) was out of the mare 'Sundown's Shadow' owned by Diane. Fran Kerik also brought a mare to produce 'Heza' Glowin' Rock' & Bev's good mare', TC Pride (Pride of Midnight line) produced 'Topaz Ebony Isle' for Chris Bayens and 'Topaz Chantilly Lace' for Sawsha Caines.

While standing at Bev's, Topaz got into some kind of 'mischief' and I found a suitable surcingle and 'laid him down'. This is an old horseman's method started by desert Bedouins with their Arabians. I believe it instills the same attitude in a horse's mind as the modern method of 'join-up'.

In 1999, a university in California successfully isolated the color gene which produced Topaz's unique colour. They named it 'champagne'. It was determined that it could produce, in some cases, 100 % champagne foals. The following year, 2000, a new Registry was created in California for horses of champagne color. With the emergence of the Champagne Registry and the new and different characteristics of these foals, I was intrigued and wanted to learn more. Topaz was the first Canadian TWH Champagne to be registered in that year. Champagne foals are all born with pale blue eyes, and pink skin pigment. Suddenly, all those "palominos", "whites", "crèmes" and light off-sorrels with pink skin finally had a category of colour that fit their characteristics.

Unlike 'cremello', where the eyes remain blue all the animal's life, the champagne foal's blue eyes at birth change color at about one year and in most cases remain a lighter color than normal throughout their lives.

The Registry requirements in those early years were that pink skin must show on the nose, rectum and genital areas of a Champagne, and they must have been born with pale blue eyes. Topaz proved 'true' to his colors and was designated an 'Ivory Champagne'.



Bev at Shady Lane Acres, at Ardrossan, was producing some very fine offspring from her 'T C Pride' mare, as well as many quality 'outside' breedings, and really did not want Topaz to leave. However, I wondered - could I produce 'horses of a different color' that people might be interested to buy? I no longer had my beloved 'Walking Horse Junction' home at Ardrossan, so what to do?

Upon checking in with Winston and Donna Curtis at Winfield, I learned they had 16 papered TWH mares at their PMU farm. They too were curious about this new colour of horse. Topaz was moved there in January of 2001. *(Photo left)*

At the start of breeding season in 2001, Topaz was put into 80 acres of pasture with 16 TWH mares and four grade saddle horse mares. I called down to see how he was adjusting. "He's been herding those mares for two days now and they don't get out of the corners to eat or drink on their own without his say-so!" Winston told me. Topaz 'caught' 19 of those mares and nine of the foals were champagnes.

Topaz stayed at the Curtis Ranch for about five years. They held yearly production sales of all their foals and in one sale I found myself bidding against \*\*Kim Pringle, from Arden, Ontario. The colt we both wanted was Cee Dee Sadie's Hobo (Later named *The Iceman*.) I lost out on him, but came away from the sale with Cee Dee Kit's Handsome # 2767, a beautiful gold champagne colt.

(About this time, a well-known horse trainer & outfitter was heard to comment at one of these sales, that there was *no such thing* as 'Champagne'. Years later after acquiring three champagne sons of Topaz, he was successful in selling all three at an auction for a total of \$18,000! He may have changed his mind?)

Topaz had a beautiful disposition. Yet his amber eyes were always a little 'disconcerting'. Lighter than normal, they did not appear friendly. I recall his being at our 'once upon a time' demo booth for our various Tennessee Walker horse clubs at Northlands Indoor Rodeo in Edmonton, and hearing the many comments about his eyes being 'different'.

Once while he was at Curtis's, I was summoned to come catch him and see if he was okay. He had been kicked into a corner of barb-wire fence by two brothers of Belgian breeding. Two horsewomen, dining at the restaurant across from the quarter section pasture he was in with about 10 or 12 other stallions after spring breeding season was past, saw the ruckus and went looking for Winston and Donna. I drove around that whole quarter and finally found him standing alone, hiding in the trees near a salt lick. He was covered in blood from head to toe. I got the truck out, returned with halter and lead shanks and after disengaging a couple of trailing barb wires from mane and tail, I walked him home across the highway.

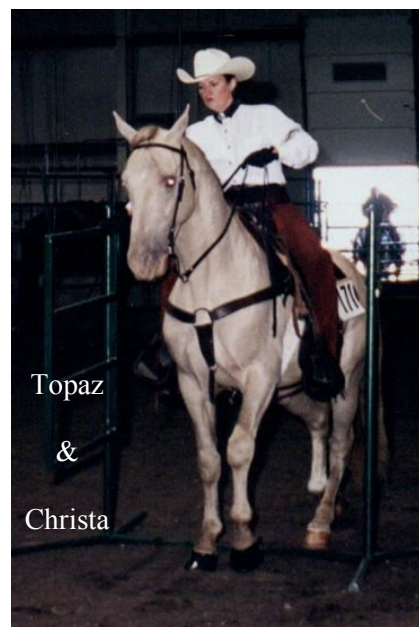
There I was first introduced to the medicinal value of just cool running water. Winston and I checked him over and could not find any real deep open cuts. I was very concerned of course, but Winston assured me that just washing him well with plain soap and water (& Creolin, I believe) and a real good rinsing would probably do the trick and he'd be fine. And he was!

Years later when boarding two of Topaz's sons at Bill Jess's Glory J Ranch near Stony Plain, I got to see firsthand results on one of his injured weanlings. Also in 2016, while house-sitting in Panama, I was happy to demonstrate to Kevin, my new Panamanian friend (who spoke no English), how just cleaning the wound simply and continuously for 15 to 20 minutes of running cool water daily would reduce swelling and promote healing. He too was amazed that his young stallion's foot wound was healed up within a couple of weeks.

In those years at Curtis's he was taken away two or three times for training with Christa, with the intention of showing him. He seemed to welcome it. In a trail class, with Christa, he was hard to beat. They made me proud! (*Photo right*)

He was rarely difficult to catch or handle. I recall being in the holding pen prior to a class at Olds. I had him backed into a crowded corner, when Dawn Sigurdsson, I believe it was, asked, "Bill, is that Topaz you're riding?" "Yes," I quietly replied, and prayed that none of the others would panic in those close quarters.

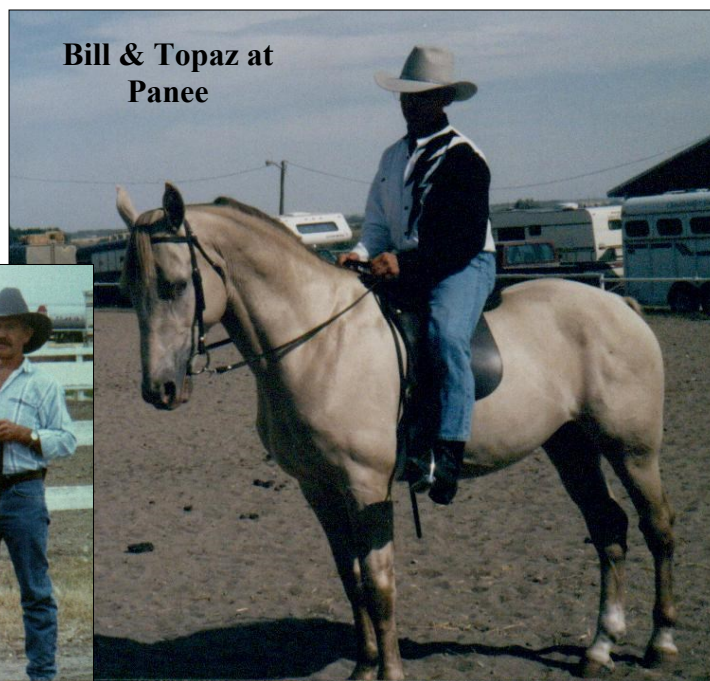
That may have been the show where I foolishly entered a 'pole bending' class. Since I had never tried this before with any horse, we did the pole-bending reasonably well, but at the other end when I gave him both spurs and tried to run for the finish line, he refused. Instead he let a fart, then crow-hopped perfectly, not one or two but three times before leaving the arena. After the second crow-hop some friends in the stands started to clap and I was actually starting to enjoy myself while Topaz executed the third near-perfect buck.



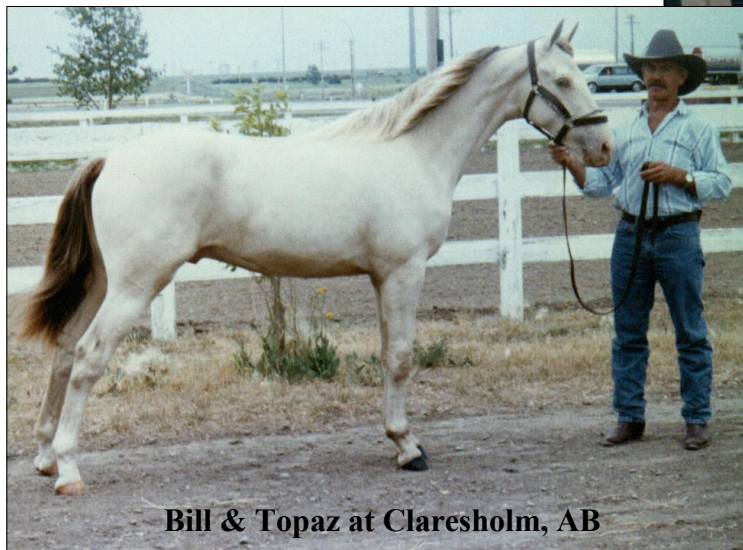


The U.S. judge laughed me out of the arena, but I did receive a ribbon for the best 'performance'.

I hope it's true  
because it's how I remember it!



**Bill & Topaz at  
Panee**



**Bill & Topaz at Claresholm, AB**

of course, very interested in any and all the new 'girls' he met on that about 12 mile ride. Topaz and I and Jack, my German Shepherd dog, had crossed the North Saskatchewan upriver of the swinging bridge, while the rest of the group led their horses across the bridge, a practise I just could not condone. By the time we came to the river crossing just below camp that 12 miles later, he was very hot and sweaty. I foolishly put a horse halter and rope on Jack to lead him across so he wouldn't be swept downstream.

About a third of the way across, Topaz seemed in distress and for whatever reason, reared up in water that was about the depth of my belly-button. The weight of the wet dog helped pull us over backwards, and there we three were, in the strong current of the freezing North Saskatchewan River. Problem was, Topaz would not get up (and I cannot really swim!). While I slowly worked him close to the river's edge (as he was mostly floating), friends came back across to see if they could help.

One guy, Bill, and his wife, from St. Paul area, came back twice, and Bill went into the river on his knees, checking my horse over to see if he might have broken a leg or something serious enough to prevent him from standing. We removed the saddle and saddle pad but after about 15 minutes submerged in that cold river, I believed we were in big trouble. Kelly Teague was there on his stallion, and good friend Luigi Valentini, riding his Shadow stud, came back more than once to encourage me to keep working on his ears. Topaz's eyes turned red; I sat on my haunches, with his head in my lap, in water about 18" deep, and believed he might be dying.

Suddenly he gave his head a hard shake, then was able to stand. Now mostly frozen, my attempts at putting that now 80 pound, soaking wet pad and saddle back on were finally accomplished with Kelly's help. Many campfire discussions later, our final conclusion and agreement was that in his overheated condition, the sudden exposure to the cold water had combined to cause him to go into a state of shock, which caused his muscles to cramp (or visa-versa). Then, with water in his ears, he had lost his sense of which way was up.

Some weeks later we bred Bill's Standardbred mare to Topaz. She produced a champagne filly – 'A Life for a Life' campfire deal!

The Curtis years were good for Topaz (& me). Winston and Donna were very promotion oriented, as they specialized in more than one breed of heavy horses which they showed throughout western Canada. The majority of their horses were, of course, mares, and the total herd was somewhere around 160 head. They made a very deliberate attempt to purchase a wide range of all the better bloodlines of registered Tennessee Walkers that were readily available in western Canada. Winston was an excellent judge of 'horse-flesh' and a very good horseman. He drove his teams daily in winter to feed the horses that were spread over several quarters of land. I believe Donna was the promotions and advertising part of a very well organised team. Their yearly production sales at Lakedell, further east on Hwy #13, brought horsemen and women from all over Canada, and judging from the ownership of some of the Topaz offspring, even some from the States.



**Mares & foals at the Curtis Ranch, Winfield, AB.**



**Topaz leaves the Curtis Ranch**

However, around 2005, PMU farms were starting to be phased out. Topaz was moved from Curtis ranch in April of 2006. I was able to travel to a different quarter section and catch him out of a group of 'off-duty' stallions. I brought him to the trailer and worked to get his feet back in shape as it was a nice warm April day. I had a yearling filly of his in the trailer, and as I had not seen much of him, I was a little nervous around him, plus those eyes! Once again, he proved his disposition.

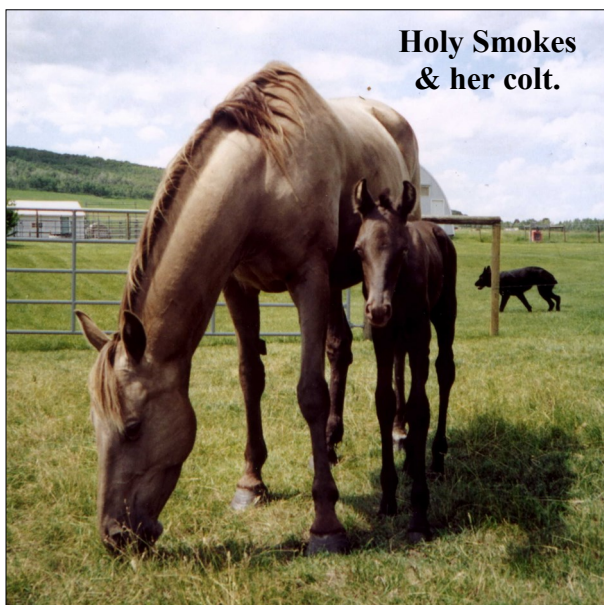
Upon arrival late to Claudia Duncan's farm, north-east of Regina, the next evening, I was not impressed by the condition of the place or of the younger horses there. I decided Cee Dee's Topaz Knell would return with me to Edmonton.

Boarding a stallion was not cheap so I decided to see what Claudia could promote with him. She had connections in Europe and we felt there was a market there. The year was 2006. She was instrumental in selling 'Knell', aka 'Honey', to a buyer in Luxemburg. Claudia was also successful in selling some of his offspring from her breedings to that European market. She later got involved in crossing him to 'Curly' mares, to create new colors and improve the conformation of those mares' offspring.

In the spring of 2007, Topaz returned temporarily to Onoway, AB area, west of Edmonton. I had found 10 mares in the general area that I felt he would cross well with and so convinced their owners to care for him while I went away to Mexico to get married. He was in great condition and still as easily handled as ever.



## HERE ARE SOME STORIES OF HIS OFFSPRING FROM THE FOLKS WHO OWNED THEM:

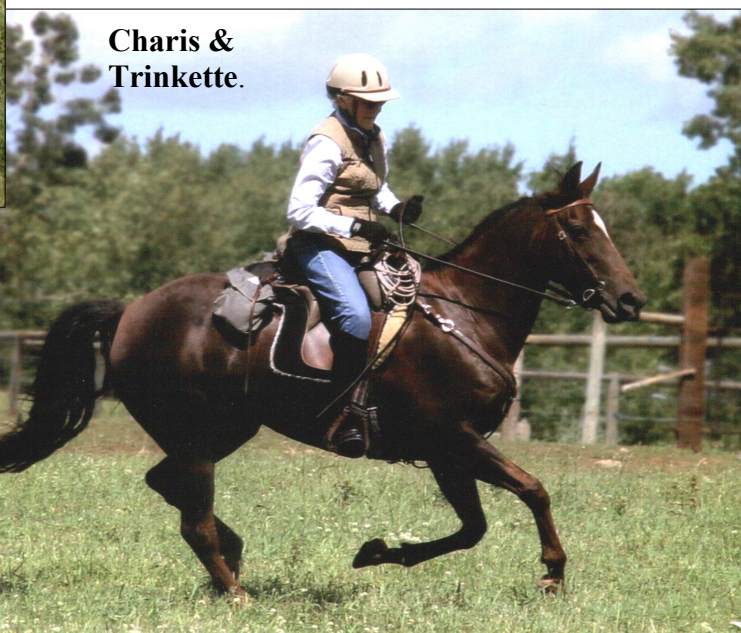


**Holy Smokes  
& her colt.**

**\*BRENDA BAKER, Calgary, AB** writes, June, 2018:

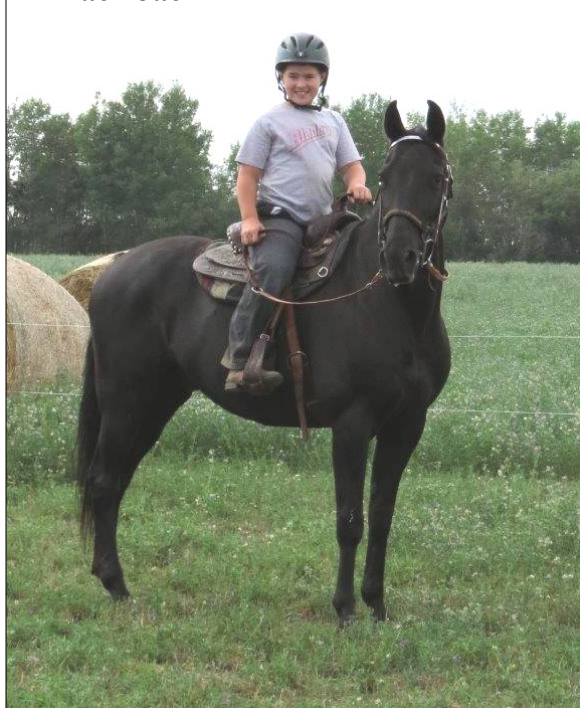
*I had a number of Topaz offspring. 'Holy Smokes', aka 'Smokey', was and still is a great riding horse; totally bonded to her rider, (my husband Dave), and people in general. It's hard to convince anyone with a horse like that to breed them as they would lose the use of their mare for about a year. I only had one foal from her, a colt that was gelded at a year, as I had no use for a stallion.*

*I felt the same way about 'Trinkette' (right). She had perfect conformation and she was an energetic, honest mount. Charis Cooper, who bought her from me felt the same way. The only reason I sold her was that I looked big on her. But I might not have bred her either.*



**Charis &  
Trinkette.**

**Black Jack**



*Both of these mares were meant for experienced riders, as they were so forward moving that they would have become very irritated with poor handling.*

*The geldings I had by Topaz, Black Jack and Flashback, were sold by age 4 and they were wonderful trail horses that lived busy, happy lives as they were sold to serious horse people.*

*I think you should be glad so many of his offspring were such good using horses with the smooth gait as a bonus. Mine were as tough in the mountains as I could ask for and I certainly appreciated them.*

*Why didn't I keep breeding to Topaz? I guess the reason was that Millarville to Ardrossan is a fair hike when there were so many studs closer, and his years at Winfield were not really conducive to outside breeding as that was not the norm on a PMU farm.*



**\*\*KIM PRINGLE, Arden, Ontario** writes, June, 2018:

*I find myself thinking about horses a lot lately. I close my eyes and see the ghosts of the horses from my past and there were some really good ones. Especially this Father's Day weekend. My dad - like me - loved horses and he was a story teller. He passed on so many colorful stories from when he was growing up, the trouble he got into and the things he saw.*

*When he was a kid they had work horses on the farm. The team of work horses that he remembered most was 'Kate & Jess'. They were used for hauling logs over the frozen lakes in Kenebec County and around the Pringle farm in the 40's & 50's. The big work team wore 'sharp shod' horse shoes, so they could pull heavy loads across the ice and not slip. My dad said he remembers seeing the team go through the ice one time. There was blood & water flying from the sharp shod horses trying to get out of the lake and men jumping into the freezing water risking their lives to save the horses. His favourite riding horse was a little brown mare with a limp that no one else wanted. He named her 'Silver' like the Long Ranger's mount, and said often that she was the best horse ever. (He was 10 years old.)*

*So you see, it is important that we remember the 'good horses' and the people who loved them. I was recently asked by Bill Howes to write about my experience with a horse I owned, raised and trained, that was sired by Topaz Merry Go.*



Cee Dee Sadie's Hobo (in back)  
and another Topaz foal, with Kim.

*The horse's registered name was Cee Dee Sadie's Hobo. The name was changed when he was 9 months old, at a 'Name the Foal', Tim Hortons Camp Day, in Kingston Ont. I brought him there to help raise money to send kids to camp and to let people see a Tennessee Walking Horse.*

*People all across Kingston were in awe of how quiet he was and how much he loved the attention - but mostly it was 'O.M.G. - what colour is that'? The name that was chosen for him was 'The Iceman', because*

*he was so cool. I called him ICE and he was a Classic Champagne. (Thank goodness he never got named after a donut.)*

*I first saw ICE when he was a weanling. I flew to Alberta because I knew that there was going to be an auction of various breeds of horses and foals that fall and six Topaz weanlings were going to be in it. Four of the weanlings were champagnes. I spotted 'Ice' right away and decided 'I want that foal!' I ended up in a bidding war with Bill Howes, but I was determined to bring ICE to Ontario.*

*The first winter with ICE was mostly about 'catching him'. He'd been raised on three sections of land so 300 acres was peanuts to him. We worked on our partnership, join up and follow up, and keeping that champagne coat clean. Over the next 3 years I brought him to some of the biggest events around so he could get used to traveling, crowds and being in new places. He attended the International Plowing Matches and represented the Tennessee Walking Horse at Can Am Equine Horse Show. Both events had thousands of people. ICE took it all in stride and went with the flow. He did not care where he was. We would often have the horses in our front lawn at the farm and*

***ICE would stop traffic! People would pull over to see him, get their picture taken with him and want to know more about him. He had hundreds of 'drive by' fans - Everyone loved him.***

***My horse friends were impressed with his conformation, big easy walk and a canter to die for. He was a western pleasure dream horse. I showed him at lots of local events in hand, trail obstacle and we did a lot of TWH Gaited Demonstrations.***



**Kim riding Ice**



**Kim and Ice cantering.**

***We did gaited/reining demos at the Kemptville Agriculture College. A good friend of mine who is a very knowledgeable western horse rider asked to ride ICE. So I told her to get up on him bareback and canter him around the round pen. To this day she still says if it had been any other horse except ICE she would never have agreed to do it. She was blown away with how smooth that rocking chair canter was.***

***During that time, I started to work with Parelli Natural Horsemanship and ICE was my Levels horse. Back then, in order to pass a level, you had to successfully complete all four of the disciplines. We successfully completed level two and got our blue string. The liberty work we did laid the foundation for ICE to star in a movie. The actor could not ride – so I was able to direct ICE off camera. The producer and film crew were amazed and thought Ice was a rock star. Kids and girls would just fall in love with ICE. I could put them up on him bareback, with a brush and a comb and they would hang out with him for hours. ICE was the best brushed horse in the county.***

***When Ice was four we started reining. I took him to two 'Let it Rein' clinics with Craig Johnston from Texas. ICE could spin, slide and canter with the best of them. During my first clinic with Craig, I asked him if he saw many gaited horses competing in Reining. He said, "Well, until today I never saw one that could". That was one of the best compliments I have ever received! My Canadian TWH had impressed 2 Million Dollar Reiner, Craig Johnston of Texas.***

***I also used ICE in 12 – 25 mile Competitive Trail Rides. We logged hundreds of hours together. ICE lived his life with me as a barefoot performance horse. He had amazing feet. Everyone loved to ride ICE and be around him. He was always the perfect gentleman and an amazing ambassador for the breed. One thing you had to know about ICE – he had more whoa than go. He could quickly figure out who was going to push him and who was not. He was smart.***

***When ICE was 10, I sold him to Sharon Turkovich of Uxbridge, ON so she could take this wonderful horse to southern Ontario to promote Canadian Tennessee Walking Horses in her area. Sharon and ICE have continued to have a wonderful partnership.***



*The picture right is of me, Kim, standing beside ICE in the 'Presentation Ring' at Can Am Equine Emporium in London. He was 3 years old and we were doing a TWH and reining demo.*

*Below is one of my favorite pictures of me and Ice. We were attending a 'Let It Rein' reining clinic with 2 Million Dollar earner Craig Johnson.*



**Kim & Ice**



*Ice is truly loved by Sharon his second mom, and me, his first mom!*

**\*\*SHARON TURKOVICH,**  
Uxbridge, ON writes:

*Ice is a wonderful ambassador for the breed, intelligent, kind and a willing partner. The first thing people notice is his beauty which is quickly amplified when his nature, training and love of people are displayed. I have had the privilege of owning Ice for coming up to seven years and we have had many adventures together. We have done trail riding, obstacle courses, camping and numerous clinics with various clinicians. We have travelled many miles together which has been easy as Ice self-loads on the trailer and travels calmly and sensibly.*

*Ice is a very kind, gentle horse – he has put smiles on the faces of the many children he has carried with respect and safety. My neighbor's grandchildren look forward to their yearly 'birthday ride' on Ice.*

**Sharon & Ice**





## ***Conclusion to the TOPAZ MERRY GO story:***

My inability to provide a good new home for Topaz contributed to his demise. By the time I was made aware of his condition in the fall of 2014, it was already too late. He was only 21 years old.

As we travelled south to Yucatan, Mexico, a vet in the Regina area, known to Claudia, tried very hard to save him. \$1100.00 later he was gone - October 17, 2014. A sad ending for a great horse.

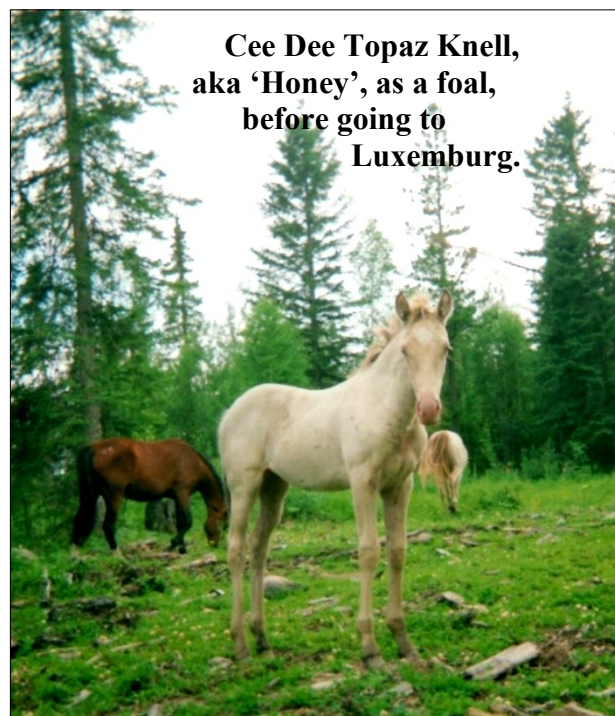
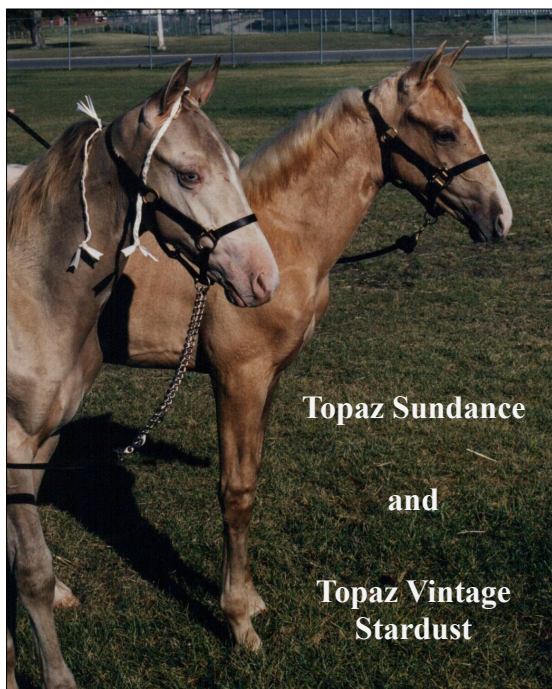
My plan for the two of us to retire somewhere along the Gulf of Mexico and get to know one another once again, after roughly 15 years of separation, was cancelled. The blue and silver chariot I'd had built at a welding shop in Devon for that purpose was given to a close friend. Another dream had to die.

In a phone conversation in about 2004, one of the three HIP judges back in '94 & '95, in a new capacity as 'Horse Specialist' for the Alberta Department of Agriculture, asked me if I still had that crème colored horse.

When I asked why he remembered him, he said, "Because he was so exceptional"

Topaz has 50 foals registered on the CLRC website in Ottawa. 50% are Champagne!

Here are a few of the foals.



### **AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

To any and all owners of TOPAZ offspring, I encourage you to share your experiences with his foals. I can be reached at [1lonecharro@gmail.com](mailto:1lonecharro@gmail.com).

TOPAZ came into my life after the end of my first marriage of 26 years. He and I shared the same trails for about twelve years, before he was hauled to a new lease at Regina. For better or for worse, he died there due to a lack of good nutrition.

He sired good, gaited foals and pioneered the development and recognition of the Champagne Breed in Canada. I will always miss him and the remaining years we might have shared.

***December, 2018***

***Bill Howes***