



Jim and Jenny Taylor

PROFESSIONALISM PERSONIFIED

BY KENDRA PEEPLES

Jim and Jenny Taylor have both been respected trainers and figures in the Morgan, American Saddlebred, and Hackney breeds for decades. Over the years, they have accumulated multiple Grand National, World Champion, and World's Grand Champion titles.

In addition to success outside of the show ring, they have also contributed to the show horse community by serving on a variety of committees and as chapter chairpersons in the United Professional Horsemen's Association (UPHA) and the American Saddlebred Horse Association (ASHA).

Somehow enough time still exists in the day for Jim and Jenny to operate a dog boarding kennel out of their farm called the Memory Lane Pet Resort. When asked why it is that they have chosen to involve themselves in so many time-consuming endeavors that are all physically and mentally challenging in unique ways, they simply explain that these industries are what has given them such fulfilling and successful lives so it is only appropriate that they reciprocate and give time and effort back.

Jim and Jenny both are very involved members of UPHA Chapter 13. They have previously served as the chairpersons for Chapter 13 on multiple occasions. Jenny currently serves as the chair on the UPHA Jackpot Sales Committee where Jim is a member as well. Jim is also a member of the UPHA Horse Show Practices

Committee. Jenny is also on the Board of Directors representing the state of Ohio for the ASHA. And, of course, Jim served as president of the UPHA from 2009-2010.

"I think it's just because both of us are very passionate about all aspects of the horse business," said Jenny, explaining their deep involvement. "We want to make things better and help stop some downward trends that have been facing the industry recently. As young people come in, we'd like them to also try to be involved and work on this. Things don't get better if you don't work at it."

"I thought the UPHA was a very worthwhile organization," added Jim. "I had been supportive of it for years and years because I knew the UPHA had the future of the profession of horse training at heart. I was involved in the horse business, so I thought I should get involved in the UPHA, too."

After their years of involvement in and out of the show ring, Jim and Jenny made a presentation that would become an important topic for years to come and one that is still at the forefront of current events and issues in all three breeds of the UPHA.

"The Future of the Professional Horse Trainer" was researched by the Taylors along with the help of Todd Graham. The findings of this paper were presented at the 2014 UPHA Convention whereby it was explained that 40 percent of the ribbons at the Kentucky State Fair that past year were won by horses aged 10 years and older.

There were more ribbons than horses in the two-, three-, and four-year-olds in the 28 junior horse classes offered.

The figure that perhaps stands out the most was the realization that between 2006 and 2012 there had been a 52 percent drop in the foal crop of American Saddlebreds. In that same time frame, the number of stallion service reports received by the American Saddlebred Registry had dropped 47 percent. The report went on to detail specific percentage drops at eight of the major Saddlebred shows.

In a way, what the Taylors and Graham had presented was something that had been hidden in plain sight; people had already been commenting on dropping numbers, particularly in the junior horse divisions, but no one had yet taken the time to put a hard number to what everyone was witnessing.

The conclusion of that report presented four assumptions, which ultimately led to a sobering conclusion: At the rate that things were headed, UPHA trainers would have fewer and fewer horses to train and thus, several hundred trainers may be forced out of the business entirely.

The Taylors invited each of the breeds to come together and work on a solution to this urgent problem. The end result was a campaign known as Stop The Drop, which encouraged trainers, stallion owners, and breeders to work together to foster an environment that would encourage breeding by lowering the costs of breeding. Those parties interested in helping this campaign joined the United Breeders Committee (UBC).

"We needed to make everyone aware of what the actual numbers had come down to," Jenny said. "A lot of people jumped in and made a concerted effort to promote breeding and pay attention to the numbers and see if we could increase them. It made a lot of people investigate why this was happening and ask, 'What do we need to change?' And they have continued to ask, 'Well, what do we need to change now?'"

According to Jim, the numbers seem to have finally leveled off, and in some cases increased a little bit. He says that the preliminary numbers are looking good, but of course only time will tell as these foal crops age and begin to be registered and start their show careers.

Because of the nature of breeding, it takes years to see the results of a foal crop.

When asked how and if the trends were changing, the Taylors had positive things to say for the Morgan community following the Grand National and World Championships this past October. The two-year-old divisions in particular were encouraging for the breed. Eight mares were led in the Grand National in-hand class, six in the stallions, 10 beautiful entries were driven in the World Champion Futurity Pleasure Driving, and seven park harness horses in total showed.

"Seeing all those good two-year-olds, the future looks bright there," Jenny remarked. In the three-year-old divisions, there were also big hunter pleasure classes, as well as pleasure driving. The four entries in the park harness divisions had all been champions across different regions of the country, and people were pleased to see some new faces out there.

Jim and Jenny had the pleasure of showing some of these nice young colts at this past Grand National. Jim showed a two-year-old pleasure driving horse named CRMS Masterpiece to win the Grand National Pleasure Driving qualifier for owner Elizabeth Burick. This horse is sired by a relative newcomer to the breeding world, CBMF Over The Moon.

Jim also presented Liquid Assets, a three-year-old stallion sired by Town Assets who has been undefeated in his harness career so far. He is owned by George Schott of the Maine Event Morgans, a prominent breeding program. At this year's Grand National, "Titan" added another Grand National and World Champion title to his impressive show record. Jenny Taylor also showed Cherished Rose, a four-year-old park saddle mare sired by Cherished Assets and owned Arcuri Stables Inc. This mare earned reserve title in her Grand National qualifier.

This year's success in Oklahoma City was certainly no anomaly in the history of Memory Lane Farm. If you have ever attended a show with the Taylors present, there is an excellent chance that you have been able to see either Jim or Jenny (and in most cases, both) take a turn down victory lane. Jenny primarily handles the saddle divisions and Jim mainly takes care of the driving classes. Over the years,

however, they have each earned their fair share of titles across a multitude of divisions.

Jenny got her start in horses when she was a young girl. At the age of nine, her father bought her a Morgan that she took to her local hunter jumper barn. They showed in the open jumping pony division all over her local Ohio home. The second horse that her father bought her was a Morgan as well. When she brought this new face to her jumper barn, she was told, much to her chagrin, "This horse will not jump."

Faced with the new problem of finding a good job for this horse, Jenny headed to a nearby Saddlebred training facility and asked for help. It was then that Jenny was first introduced to George Knight who took this three-year-old stallion and turned him into Jenny's very first park horse. The horse's name was Wil-O-Mor Spitfire, and after about six months of training, George showed this colt to win the Three-Year-Old Park Harness class at the Morgan Gold Cup show.

It was then Jenny's turn to show this colt, and since he was still a stallion, 13-year-old Jenny had to take him in the open classes. She was hooked immediately.

Jim Taylor grew up with a father who trained hunter jumper horses, so he and Jenny had a similar early background. When he was 13-years-old, Jim's father told him he needed to get a job so that he could start paying for his own things, so he began working for a local Saddlebred trainer. All throughout high school, Jim worked on the weekends and through the summers at that barn in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania.

The first Morgan that Jim trained and handled was a horse named Petalbrook Odyssey. The owner of that horse was Donna Zimmerman who would later return as a customer of Jim and Jenny's. At that point, it was about 1980 and Jim was working in Indiana. A few years later, he would move to Ohio where he would meet Jenny (Rhue).

Fast forward a few decades and more than a few champions later, Jim and Jenny Taylor call Medina, Ohio their home. They currently train Morgans, Saddlebreds, and Hackney ponies. Many of their clients have been friends and partners with them for decades, and there are also a number of newcomers.



Steven Handy and Jim Taylor shared a smile after Bellerophon GCH and Handy won the Pleasure Driving Amateur Gentlemen's at the Morgan Grand National. They have made the victory pass in this class three years in a row.



Liquid Assets is a young park harness star who has been undefeated in his two- and three-year-old years with Jim Taylor presenting for George Schott of Maine Event Morgans. He is pictured here in 2016 after winning the Two-Year-Old Park Harness World Championship. He added another unanimous victory in the 2017 Three-Year-Old Park Harness World Championship.



In the Saddlebred world, Jim has recently driven Real Steel to great success, which includes earning the win in the Fine Harness Stallion/Gelding qualifier at the Lexington Junior League this year and a third place finish in the Fine Harness World's Grand Championship in 2016. This entry is owned by the Mendonhall Inc.

One couple that has known the Taylors for decades is Paul and Joy Scala. They met the Taylors about 28 years ago. The first horse that the Scalas had them work was a two-year-old stallion named Wild Country who is still alive today.

"Other people had told us that he couldn't trot well, but then we moved to Jim and Jenny's and he became a park horse," Joy laughed. "We have really had a blast with them. We don't live too far away from them so we get to come out pretty often."

She then explained how Jenny was able to pick out the great park saddle mare Firewind Diva as a two-year-old. This mare would go on to be undefeated under saddle for her three-year-old, four-year-old, and five-year-old, and seven-year-old years. She was only second once, and that was in 2001 in the Grand National Park Saddle Mares/Geldings class. She would come back later in the week to win the Park Saddle World Champion title for the Scalas.

Her famous son, PLS High Pine Picasso GCH, would later go on to win three consecutive Park Saddle World Champion titles with Jenny for the Scalas.

Elizabeth Burick is another long-time friend and partner of the Taylors. Burick had lived in the same area as the Taylors and had been showing horses since she was young. When she decided that she wanted to seek out the help of a trainer, she immediately called Memory Lane and asked if there were any stalls available.

Two of her favorite horses that she has owned have been KJM Five Star and CBMF Victory Pass. CBMF Victory Pass earned the world champion roses in the Pleasure Driving World Championship in 2012 with Jim. KJM Five Star and Elizabeth earned the English Pleasure Amateur Masters World Champion title in 2011. Elizabeth had always had the goal of owning and also showing her own horse to a world champion title, and she was elated to have accomplished that goal with the Taylors.

"It has been so nice to be able to see horses that I've owned in the past go on to be successful with other owners and trainers, as well," she explained. "I think that says something about how Jim and Jenny train them. They don't pick up any bad habits, and then they are able to go on and bring success to their new owners."

Rick Lane has worked with the Taylors in both the Saddlebred and Morgan worlds. Lane manages the horses of George Schott and Robin and Robert Veghte of Mendonhall. Some of the recent horses that Lane has managed with the Taylors have been Liquid Assets, Real Steel, and Fabuloso. The first interaction that Lane had with the Taylors was when they had decided that MEM Blue Chip should be ridden by a professional. In 2014 and 2015, Jenny Taylor rode Blue Chip to the reserve world champion title in the park saddle ladies division.

"I'd liked their horses and the work that they had done," Lane said. "I thought Blue Chip and Jenny would just click. It seemed like a good fit for their program."

Lane says the Taylors are very enthusiastic about their work and that they just keep at it quietly. Their long-term success is a product of them learning what it takes to be successful since they have been in the industry for so long now. They have a program that they adhere to and they go into every operation looking to conduct good business. Lane also said that having shared goals has made it easy and straightforward since everyone is looking to accomplish the same things.

Iann Fu Longenecker of the Dragonsmeade Farm had watched the Taylors show for years before sending her own horses there. She described Jenny as the "vivacious" one and Jim more as the "calm and cool" one, and she said that they're both just genuinely nice people who are always professional. The Taylors and Tim Roesink often partner up in the training of the young Dragonsmeade horses and will travel together to watch the horses work and see their progress.

"They have such a good working relationship," Iann said. "When they start a horse, Jim really trains them to get that trot and drive that's already in them without having them take a hold of the bridle. For trainers, it's truly an art to be able to do that. It's fun to drive horses that he has trained because of that. You can just motor them around the ring."

Jeanne and Dale Fuelling are newcomers to the barn. They came with KJM Grand Slam and Ledyard Rare Assets. After recently making the switch to the roadster division, the Fuellings were thrilled when Jeanne was named the Grand National Champion Roadster Under Saddle. Jeanne and Dale each showed Rare Assets in the classic pleasure saddle and driving divisions, respectively, to earn third place. In regards to Grand Slam, Jeanne said it took a lot of moxie for the Taylors to decide to change divisions two months before Oklahoma, but it just worked.



After winning the Park Saddle World Championship in 2014 with PLS High Pine Picasso GCH for the third year in a row, Jim, Jenny, and owners Joy and Paul Scala gathered around for a celebratory photo.



Jenny and Beringer Red had a long and winning career together. From their beginning days in the fine harness and three-gaited divisions, and then to the five-gaited division where they found their niche.

"I had a blast showing 'Gus' and to win was completely exhilarating!" Jeanne recalled. "And the best part is that Gus has found his career... He loves it!" Dale also feels that his driving skills and overall confidence have improved vastly since coming to Memory Lane. They credit this to Jim's signature calm and cool demeanor, and Dale has even nicknamed him "Dr. Smooth."

Steven Handy had met Jim before he became a client when Jim had helped Lynn Peoples head his horse Bellerophon GCH in his junior days. Jenny had helped out with the Young Adult Alliance (YAA) video series as well as the Bull Riding Calcutta at the Gold Cup Regional. What stood out to him was their willingness to help a friend and to give back to the industry in whatever way they could.

"I thought highly of them through those interactions, but since becoming their client, I am an even bigger fan," Handy explained. "They are talented, welcoming, fun and are simply just great people. They have a true love for their horses, and what I believe sets them apart from other top trainers in the industry is their management and organizational skills. They have a great team at the farm that enables them to work a high volume of horses in an efficient manner while giving each horse a personalized experience and ensuring that they all get the attention they need to be their best."

Something that is continually heard when people are asked what their initial impressions of the Taylors is their professionalism. Those that have the privilege of having the Taylors personally train their horses echo that sentiment, as well as frequently mentioning how

they are straightforward, drama-free, and simply work hard every day. They are trainers, instructors, committee members, and horsemen in every sense of the word.

There is a saying that what you put into something is what you get out of it. The Taylors have put in decades of hard work and dedicated countless hours to the industries that they work in. They have been rewarded over the years through their horses' and clients' successes, as well as through being universally respected and revered by their peers.

When Jenny was just beginning her journey as a horse trainer, she said she wanted everything; the nice horses, the good rides, a beautiful farm, simply everything. If her younger self could see where she and her husband are now, she'd likely be very happy as the Taylors are today.



A newcomer to the Memory Lane roster has been Awesome At This. This stunning three-year-old recently won the ASR Sweepstakes Three-Year-Old Fine Harness with Jim at the whip for owner Faydelle Schott.



CH Our Brilliant Belle and Jim Taylor had an undefeated year together in 2011. They are pictured here winning the Junior Fine Harness Mares class at the Kentucky State Fair. They would later go on to win the championship.



Dragonsmeade Vendome is just one of the Dragonsmeade bred youngsters that Jim Taylor has shown to success in recent years. Vendome and Jim won the World Championships in the pleasure driving division for two-year-olds, three-year-olds and four-year-olds.