



Sarah and Milky Way at Goucher College, competing in the cross country phase, 1973.

After a year at St. Timothy's School in Stevenson, Maryland, I decided I had to buy a horse. At 16, dad said I could drive to work in his 67 Chevy, affectionately called Old Blue (although dad thought she was green.) My search started with an interview at Easy Method Driving School as a telephone sales clerk. Job requirements were a skirt, bra and stockings every day. Salary was \$2.50 an hour, with a \$0.25 bonus for booking a new customer for a single session, and \$0.35 for a double lesson. Gulping at the requirements, (I did not own skirts, or panty hose) I decided that a horse was worth hard work, borrowed clothes from mom and started the job.

I settled into the 40 hour work week with dedication, saving every penny and scouring the horse ads in the Washington Post. My instructor had lectured me about the nice old school master horse that I needed, so I started dutifully trying out older, safe horses. I rode a Morgan for \$750 that was really smart and stubborn, and I am sure he could have taught me a lot. I rode a crazy bay mare for \$650 with a lot of speed, but kept looking. I saw an ad for a green Thoroughbred gelding, \$1200, at Deerfield Horse Center, Great Falls, Va.

My folks were out of the country on vacation – I had stayed home to work and find a horse. I decided that Old Blue could make it to Virginia – she needed oil, gas and water at every fill up, but I had faith. We started out after work, and made it almost to the light at Walker Road and Georgetown Pike when she boiled over across from the gas station. I parked Old Blue, and hiked down Walker and up Arnon Chapel to Deerfield.

I announced myself, and they brought out the cutest horse I'd ever seen. He had a round wormy belly, but what an amazing powdery blaze, coppery coat and 4 white socks. They told me again how green he was, and that I should take it easy. We went into the ring, and I got a leg up – no one offered to ride him first, but I was game. Everything seemed to go into slow motion, he was pokey, but felt great. I trotted him around, he was a bit green turning, and hopped a little running into the canter. The other folks were all watching me ride – I didn't get that, but felt on top of the world. I love Milky Way bars, and I dreamed of calling him Milky Way – his blaze looked like the constellation, and his coat was the color of the caramel in the middle. I had to have him.

My granddaddy called that evening to check on me, and I told him about the drive to Virginia, the boil over, and how the car had recovered well after sitting for a couple of hours. I told him all about Milky Way. He then called my folks, panicked about this crazy granddaughter let loose on her own. They called me, and thank God, supported my wild dreams, as always.

\$1200 was way over my budget, so I offered \$1000 – that was everything I had earned working all summer. They accepted, and Milky Way was mine. I set about arranging all of the logistics, and found out more about Milky Way. He had come in a couple of weeks before I bought him with a herd of wild ones. He tossed everyone off in the breaking process, with some awesome aerial movements. When I rode him, they were waiting for fireworks – sure that one more sale would go down the tubes. When he and I got along, they took the money I offered and counted their blessings.

Now he did have a cold back, and tossed me off more times than I could count, but I loved his canter and jump, and loved every minute owning him. After some ranting, my school instructor came to love him, too – who could hate that face!