

Diablo Honors.....

Laurie Baine

By Jan Novak

When Laurie Baine was 4 years old, she had a little box of treasures that included money she was saving. When her parents asked her what she was saving for, she said to buy a ranch—a horse ranch. She fulfilled that dream in a life devoted to horses.

Laurie was born in Rocky River, Ohio, the child of Erskine Squary Baine and Helen Hibbard Baine. In love with horses, she lied about her age when she was 11 to get a job at an equestrian center to be near horses. She said she was 16. She continued to



Laurie's parents

save and bought her first horse when she graduated from high school. Her early career was in banking, earning enough money to care for her horse and build a life in Ohio. Her bank employer paid for her college education.

Her parents, longing to escape the snow and cold, moved to Diablo in 1968. They initially lived in Mary's Haven, the last house on Mt. Diablo Scenic before you enter the state park. Laurie's grandmother came with and moved to Rossmoor. After trying for a few years, they finally convinced Laurie to move to Diablo, promising her it was "horse country" and offering to pay for

transportation of her horse, High Society. They built a new home (including a corral for her horse) for the three of them that Laurie still occupies. Honoring his Scottish heritage, he named his home Thistle-Do-Me. Diablo was indeed horse country—very rural with horses everywhere. She loved riding High Society to the post office.

After working at a veterinary clinic for a bit, Laurie moved back into banking, working at Security National Bank in Walnut Creek and continuing to save her money. For a fun "date night", she would attend the livestock auction in Hayward on a Friday night and buy ponies that otherwise would have been slaughtered. She nursed them back to health and sold them to parents who bought them as Christmas gifts for their daughters. She always delivered them on Christmas Day.

In 1974, Laurie made her childhood dream come true, buying a ranch property on Marsh Creek in Brentwood. She named it Thistledome. She then set out to make it a viable purebred Arabian horse business. She raised, bred, sold and leased 50 head of horses. She also donated several young stallions to UC Davis and young colts to the Handicapped Children's Society. Not content to just care for 50 horses, she also had goats and chickens. She even had a flock of 60 "visiting ducks" that she fed and protected from coyotes. After 30 successful years as a rancher, she sold the ranch. On her last day at the ranch, the ducks flew away...hoping to find someone as lovely as Laurie to feed and protect them.



Laurie with some "rescue ponies"



Feeding the goats at Thistledome

In 1994, Laurie took up line dancing, which she continues to do at least once a week. She has competed in the line dancing Senior Olympics in Rossmoor.



Thistledome Desert Fire

Laurie is a funny and lively woman. Three great stories of the many she told me involved a pony, New Year's Eve at Diablo CC and a famous logo. Laurie's father spent an entire day planting beautiful green bushes around their horse pasture. By evening, her pony had pulled every single bush out, much to her father's dismay and Laurie's laughter. She also fondly remembers a Chinese lion dragon performance in which the dragon jumped off of the clubhouse veranda onto the road to the delight of onlookers. And that familiar horse you see at the beginning of every Tri-Star movie? That is Laurie's horse, Thistledome Desert Fire.

Although Laurie no longer owns real horses, her home displays her love with two Arabian carousel horses that are true works of art. She still loves her Diablo home and the 50+ years of memories created there. She particularly loves the deer and fawns but is less thrilled with the wild pigs.

She would like to thank her neighbors, particularly those on Mt. Diablo Scenic, and all of the past and present postal employees for making her many years in Diablo so wonderful. If you happen to see a spry woman with an amazing cowboy hat at the post office, please stop and say hello to Laurie Baine. She is a delight and we are happy that she chose to make Diablo her home for the past 50 years.



One of two carousel horses



Laurie Baine: the Lady Rancher