

SUPERSTAR

CH-EQ Oh What A Feeling

by Bob Funkhouser

There is so much to be said about the truly great equitation horses; those who have done the job for a variety of riders with a variety of skills. These horses give their all with a great attitude no matter how much repetition they've received and how many times they've gone to the ring in a day.



Nick Maupin was Oh What A Feeling's partner when the gelding won his first world's champion title.

CH-EQ Oh What A Feeling fits that description and when he passed away in May at the age of 21 he left Knollwood Farm as one of the best of all time. One of the fascinating facts about the gelding is that it takes 15 points to earn the CH-EQ designation from ASHA and he finished his career with 64 points, one of the top totals ever. Also, like most of those greats, he wasn't just exactly push button and according to his longtime trainers Scott and Carol Matton, would test you if you weren't paying attention and you never knew when he might unleash one of his signature bucks. Sassy was one word used to describe him.

"Cartman," as he was known by his Knollwood Farm family, was bred to be a good one. Leslie Bennett crossed The New York Times with a Supreme Sultan daughter, Sultan's Julie, to produce the 1981 foal. His second dam, Colonial Caroline, a daughter of the great Katie Boone (by Ace O'Goshen), was a Buck And Wing half sister to reserve world's grand champion CH Blaze Of Brilliance and the noted former number one sire Stonewall's Main Event.

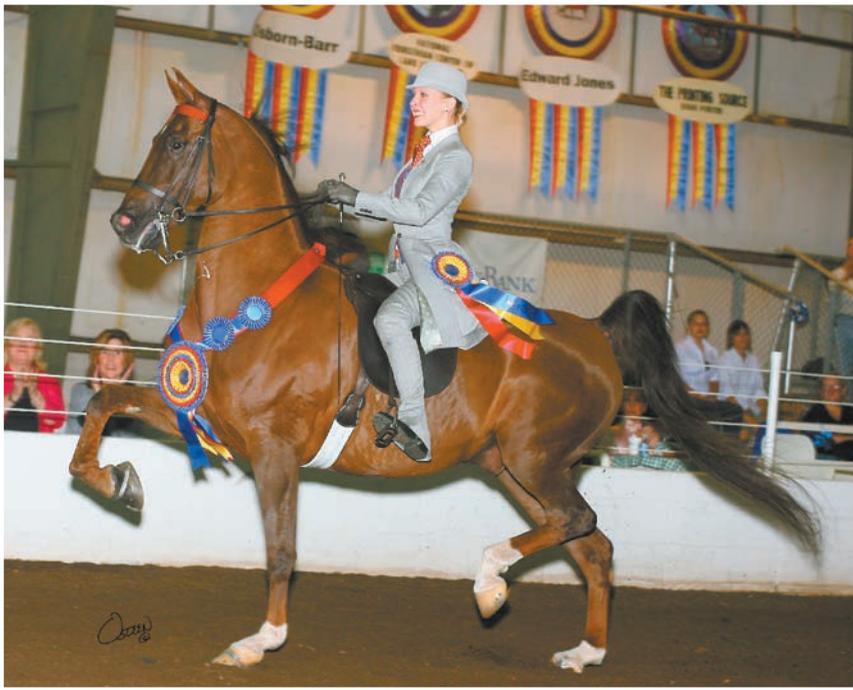
The early part of Cartman's career was spent in the show pleasure division starting with Patty Wooters putting him in the ring with Stephanie Greenberg. He then went to Cary Volz and Louis Lowe for Lauren Shearen. In 2004, under the direction of Bob Griffin, he moved to the pleasure equitation division with Jourdan Schaye, starting a path to greatness with a Top 3 finish in the Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion Junior Finals.

Following another season with Schaye and another Top 3 Medallion Finals, Cartman went to his fourth junior exhibitor, Nick Maupin. Scott and Carol Matton purchased him for the young man who was just coming out of Academy.

"He was freaking gorgeous and his gears were right," remembered Scott. "That's why we wanted him. He was Nick's first horse right out of Academy. He was already equituated but he had his quirks, bucking being one of them. Even well into his career he could come out of nowhere with a buck on a pattern. It cost us a few classes.

"I loved him as there was so much of him. Carol would ride him and ride him and work him down and then he would go through the gate with those kids and swell up like you hadn't ridden him in a week."

In their first season together there were many great moments for Nick and Cartman, including winning the 13 & under show pleasure and Reserve Saddle & Bridle Junior Pleasure Medallion Finals titles in the same week. That would be followed by the American Royal 11-13 equitation blue, the Saddle Seat Equitation Reserve Grand Championship and the UPHA Junior Challenge Cup Finals Reserve National Championship.



Deanna Lanigan and "Cartman" were the Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion Finals Champions and 16-Year-Old World's Champions in 2008.

In 2007, Maupin would ride Cartman to his first world's champion blue and reserve world's champion of champions honors in addition to the Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion Finals honors and another Reserve UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals.

The titles just kept flowing for CH-EQ Oh What A Feeling and his young riders. Deanna Lanigan was next in line and she accomplished a Lexington grand championship, 16-year-old world's championship, Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion National Finals, National Pleasure Equitation Senior Finals and a Reserve NHS Good Hands Finals during their time together.

The Budzinski family would be Cartman's finals owners. Daughter Sydney would be the first to partner with the star. Their second season together, 2011, was off the charts with success: Lexington Junior League Pleasure Equitation 13 & Under Grand Champion, World's Champion 12-Year-Old Saddle Seat Equitation, the UPHA Pleasure Challenge Cup 13 & Under Finals, the ASHA National Pleasure Equitation Championship, the Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion Junior Finals, the National Pleasure Equitation Olympics Junior Championship, and the Reserve UPHA Junior Challenge Cup Finals were among their celebrated titles.

Cartman's career would go in a new direction in 2012 as Ainsley "Little Bud" Budzinski took over the reins and made her mark in walk and trot equitation. A reserve world's champion title and the UPHA Walk and Trot Challenge Cup National Finals were among their accolades. Cartman would take Ainsley into her walk, trot, canter years with the same success. They triumphed as the reserve world's champion of champions in the 2014 Junior Equitation World's Championship and went on that year to take the National Pleasure Equitation Olympics Junior Championship, reserve in the Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion Junior Finals, the American Royal Saddle Seat Equitation Championship and the UPHA Junior Challenge Cup National Finals.

The Budzinski family leased Cartman to Frannie Gefke in 2015, however, Ainsley did have one final ride with her favorite partner, the Junior Saddle Seat Equitation Reserve World's Champion of Champions honors with a broken wrist. Just this spring before passing away, the great campaigner teamed with one last young lady, Amanda Meisenburg.

Even for trainers who have established themselves and had many nice horses throughout their careers, CH-EQ Oh What A Feeling stands above the rest. His passing was not easy for the Matton family.

"Cartman and I have been buds since the beginning," said Carol in an earlier interview with Allie Layos for an article in the American Royal program for the Equitation Hall of Fame. "He knew all his stuff when I got him, I just had to make it part of his day-to-day routine and teach him not to be so sassy about it.

"What makes any horse a good horse is that he thinks very highly of himself."

It was his attitude, beauty and precise way of going that made CH-EQ Oh What A Feeling one of the equitation world's true superstars!



CH-EQ Oh What A Feeling added another Saddle & Bridle Pleasure Medallion Finals, a UPHA Pleasure Equitation Finals, a world's champion title and a National Pleasure Equitation Olympics title, in addition to a UPHA Junior Challenge Cup Finals Reserve National Championship to his legacy in 2011 with Sydney Budzinski.



Ainsley "Little Bud" Budzinski teamed the superstar to both a UPHA Walk and Trot Challenge Cup National Finals and a UPHA Junior Challenge Cup National Finals title.