



People's Choice

Amateur of the Year

Sara Foy



By Jenny Grey

Sara Foy, a tireless supporter of the Morgan breed, has worked as a volunteer without any expectation of public recognition. Honored for her service to both the Morgan horse community and an outstanding 2015 show season topped by a victory pass under the spotlight with BRMF Lailani's Fireball as the English Pleasure Ladies Amateur World Champion, she has earned your well-deserved votes as the People's Choice Amateur of the Year.

Sara's parents, who owned a small, two acre property in New Hampshire, were enthusiastic sled dog racers. While Sara enjoyed the sport and pursued it with her own family for a while as an adult, what she really wanted was a horse, sharing a love of all things equine with her grandmother, a Morgan horse enthusiast. Eventually given a pony at age 9 and later a grade mare, Sara became involved in 4H and local shows until her grandmother offered to buy her a Morgan if she came up with half the money. Sara agreed and at 14 years old she became the proud owner of Morrill Mt. Morgan (Josh).

After high school and college it was a few years before Sara became heavily involved in horses again. Married to her childhood sweetheart, Mike Foy, who she started dating when he asked her to the prom, they had two daughters, Lauren and Kate. When the girls were very young, they began taking lessons with Cheryl Marcelonis at CPM Farm. "We leased a horse for them and then bought a horse, then another and another!" Sara remembered. A committed horse show mom, she and Cheryl formed the Granite State Mystical Morgan Youth Group in 1998 and she later served twice as the Granite State Morgan Horse Society President. Gradually expanding her list of responsibilities at a national level, Sara became a director of the American Morgan Horse Association for Region 1.

A passionate supporter of youth, Sara is very proud of the work she has done to organize and promote programs that include the Youth of the Year Contest, Team Morgan, the Young Adult Alliance and most recently a home schooling program she developed with AMHA Executive Director, Julie Broadway. "She is one of the most deserving people I know", Julie told us. "She inspires me with her passion, attitude and charm."

A favorite among the young people she works so hard to support, her youth group showed its appreciation when Carolyn Sebring surprised her by gathering them in Boston to cheer her on as she received her Youth Person of the Year award at the AMHA convention back in 2003. This remains one of her most cherished memories. Five years later she was recognized as the 2008 AMHA Woman of the Year alongside the late Harry Sebring, Man of the Year.

Sara has owned and shown several wonderful Morgans including the family's 'forever' horse, B Special Attraction CH and more recently, Key Biscayne GCH who transitioned to western, winning the Amateur Western Pleasure Reserve World Championship with Virginia Adams in 2014. However, it was BRMF Lailani's Fireball (Boo) with whom she would take a first world championship victory pass in Oklahoma last year.

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis several years ago, it took Sara some time to gain the confidence to ride again but her trainers, David and Kristen Cater, gave her the will to succeed. While comparatively mildly affected, Sara sometimes loses feeling in her feet and needs to be acutely 'body aware'. "The horses have kept it all in perspective",



Sara Foy, who has worked tirelessly for the Morgan breed without any expectation of public recognition, earned a first personal world championship as the unanimous 2015 English Pleasure Ladies Amateur World Champion with BRMF Lailani's Fireball.

Sara observed. "We spent a lot of time preparing for the show ring, both physically and mentally", Kristen added. "It has taken a while for Sara to believe that she was good enough to accomplish what she did. But going into the ring in Oklahoma City she felt ready; and that made all the difference. We spent a lot of time working on strategy in our ladies' group and Sara has gotten so confident showing on and off the rail."

With aspirations to be a serious world championship contender, Sara sought a horse that was not only athletically gifted, beautiful and



One of Sara's greatest pleasures is that of enjoying showing with her family. She celebrated after her world championship class with her daughters, Lauren and Kate and her trainers, David and Kristen Cater.



When Sara was called as the unanimous world championship winner, the expression on her trainer, Kristen Cater's face, was absolutely priceless. It was a joyous moment as Sara's hard work and dedication paid off with the ultimate victory.

charismatic, but also sane and sensible. A world champion in English pleasure as a three-year-old when Sara first saw him, BRMF Lailani's Fireball (Boo) fulfilled all of her requirements. "Kristen was the one who truly had the vision to buy Boo, not me", said Sara. "She had seen him while judging and convinced Tim Roesink and Lora Lyons that I should buy him!" As Sara became stronger, he matured and gave her more of a challenge. "Boo has been awesome!" she told us. "He's the epitome of a ladies' horse."

As the Morgan English Pleasure Champion with Lailani's Fireball at the Eastern States Exposition in September 2015, Sara was about to embark on the most exciting week of her show career in Oklahoma City. A frontrunner among an elite group of world-class English pleasure horses, Fireball won the English Pleasure Ladies Amateur Gelding Grand National Championship and the English Pleasure Amateur Masters Reserve Grand National Championship during the week, giving Sara confidence that she had a good shot at a world championship.

Feeling a little fatigued after the Masters qualifier, Sara decided to show in the ladies amateur world championship because the schedule allowed her a little more time to prepare. Anxious about her AMHA responsibilities that included the Youth of the Year Contest, she was being pulled in several different directions but on the championship day, David and Kristen Cater insisted she go back to her hotel room and rest. "It was the longest four hours of my life!" Sara declared.

Arriving back at the showgrounds refreshed, Sara had a wonderful class, knowing she and Boo had performed to the best of their ability. During the lineup, David gave her a big 'thumbs up' from the rail so she knew they had done well; but when she heard BRMF Lailani's Fireball announced as the unanimous world champion, she was both ecstatic and in shock, remembering little about taking a victory pass under the spotlight. In order to take it all in she had to review the video several times after the show remembering, "It was all a blur. I just wanted to go back and do it all over again!"

One of Sara's greatest pleasures is to share her passion for horses with her family. Kate and Lauren were cheering her on and Mike, who was away on business in Las Vegas, was watching the live feed. A few months before Oklahoma, Kate somehow managed to convince her mother to take Fireball shots if she won. In a great celebration back at the barn, Sara was forced to live up to the bet. "As someone who hates cinnamon, I am sure she was wishing Boo was named anything but Fireball after the championship, but it was a great addition to the memory!" Kate told us. "We are all very proud of my mother for her accomplishments this year", Lauren added. "It is incredible to see someone who has done so much for the Morgan breed get to see the dreams she built for others come true for herself."

"My mother has worked incredibly hard for her success in the ring as well as for the success of the industry", said Kate, pointing out that Sara will never turn down a lesson, and especially loves her lunge lessons – a somewhat unique point of view in Kate's experience. "She works out at the gym and at home with a single-minded focus to be better every time she gets on a horse. It was awesome to watch all that hard work come together this year!"

Sara's good friend, Mari Sanderson, who she met 10 years ago, is a director for Region 7. Having worked with Sara on AMHA business for so long, she was thrilled to see her friend win her first world championship in Oklahoma last year. "She rode the socks off that horse – out for blood and determined to win. I thought, 'Geez...she could win!' When I ran up to congratulate her afterwards my face was hurting from smiling so much!"

Mike summed up her love for horses adding, "Sara believes there is nothing better than the smile on a rider's face after a successful ride. Her passion shows in her volunteer commitment to the industry and the youth of the sport. She has been committed to bring the most out of herself, all of which accumulated in her priceless smile after winning her first world championship...Sara would say 'Amateur of the Year; that's cool' but having fun with horses, 'that's great!' She certainly had a fun year!"

Adding to the list of accolades Kristen Cater added, "Sara is a wonderful person, both on and off a horse. She allows us to take care of her horses in the best way possible and never questions what is in their best interests. The same goes for her riding; I have never had a person work so hard to be good at what she does. Sara is dedicated and ambitious and more important than success, she wants to excel at what she does and will do what she can to make that dream a reality." Of the People's Choice award Kristen added, "There isn't anyone who deserves it more. She loves horses; is dedicated to the Morgan breed and is a great supporter of the team at Cater Stables. We couldn't be happier for her!"

Sara, full of fun and optimism, is the ideal person to meet and engage new people in the Morgan breed and the wider horse industry. A tireless worker for Morgan youth, she has devoted time and energy developing successful programs that will allow our young people to carry the baton into the future. With the Young Adult Alliance firmly established, Sara believes it is time for new blood to carry her creative programs forward so as of February this year, she will be a Director Emeritus. We are delighted she won a unanimous Ladies Amateur English Pleasure World Championship with BRMF Lailani's Fireball as the jewel in the crown in her long and successful show career. We offer our heartfelt thanks for everything she has done to keep the Morgan breed both vibrant and relevant.