

The Story of Super Jewel

(I get the Point)

One of the most wonderful things about "coming of age" as a horse trainer back in the early 60's was the opportunity to be exposed to the truly great horsemen of that time. I am privileged to have known and shown with the likes of Earl and Lloyd Teater, Garland and Frank Bradshaw, Marty Mueller, Lee Roby, Owen Haily, Dale Pugh, Art Simmons, Jim B. Robertson, Chat Nichols, Dale Milligan and countless others. Doubly rewarding, and almost to a man, these legendary greats were so willing to be of help to young trainers, so forthcoming with their wisdom and advice and so sincerely interested in helping the young become better trainers, my peers and I thought nothing of picking up the phone to ask questions of the very legends of the day. These men had begun their careers in the 40's & 50's "walking through the back doors" of the main house and had, by then, moved up the "food chain" as celebrated horsemen who were proud of their profession conscious of their beginnings and now coveted by those who owned the main house. It was in the time of this wonderful environment that I found myself seeking advice from one of the most legendary of the Saddlebred trainers, Mr. Tom Moore. Perhaps more than any, Mr. Moore could be counted on to, with great patience, take all the time necessary to help, explain, demonstrate, inform, educate and answer any question you had concerning a horse, no matter how difficult or how simple. His knowledge on all subjects "horsey" was remarkable. He was truly the "411" of the time for that type of information. If you had a horse that wouldn't wear his bridle, call Tom Moore. A horse that wouldn't canter, call Tom Moore. A horse that would run off, call Tom Moore. A mare that wouldn't get in foal, call Tom Moore. A horse that had a bad tendon, call Tom Moore. Got a quarter crack, call Tom Moore. If you had a horse about to founder, even insurance agents would suggest it...Call Tom Moore! And so it was I found myself in a unique situation with no other options except to....Call Tom Moore.

Super Jewel was a wonderful, 7-year-old, 5-gaited mare that was being campaigned in open competition, at that time, by a very top horseman. She was a deep, dark liver chestnut with a beautiful head, a huge intelligent eye and ears that did not seem able to lay back. Her thick dark tail was very long and flowing. She could put her knee way above level with every step of the trot and do the same at the slow gait and rack. Being by the great Wing Commander son, Super Command, she could also flat, fly at that trot and rack. Unfortunately, she could occasionally "fly" at the canter as well and had a little history of being strong in her bridle.

She was all show horse and one that I fell in love with the very first time I saw her when she was shown at the Rock Creek horse show in Louisville, Kentucky. There should be a picture of the grounds at the Rock Creek Riding Club in the dictionary next to the word "Ambiance". The huge, brightly lit, banked outdoor ring surrounded by box seats and then neatly encased by huge old oak, maple and willow trees is perhaps the prettiest venue in America, for a horse show. On this warm and clear night in June, the only thing looking prettier to me than the grounds was this wonderful, talented and exciting mare that dashed into the ring in the 5-gaited Mare class. Looking nearly black as her warm body glistened with a bit of sweat under the lights, she put on a performance that nearly took my breath away. Racking and trotting with extreme motion and brilliance, she had that "bigger than life" aspect one notices with some actors, politicians, dancers, singers and the like. As far as speed, she was able to "lap" many of her competitors at the Rack and Trot and also, quite a few at the canter. Even so, I was quite surprised when the Judges tied her third. She may have been a little erratic and rapid in the execution of her gaits, but she looked like a real star to me. But then, there was the matter of her weight. Well, the lack of it. Actually, she was a little thin. In fact, she was very poor, so poor that her trainer was showing her with a Walking Horse breast collar so the saddle would not slide off her back and over her tail. Regardless, I was hooked and had to have her.

A little grain and some good Ohio hay surely would solve that weight problem. What I really needed, was a sponsor as her trainer was known to deal in very expensive horses while, up to that time, most of my clients' horses had been purchased for prices like ones found at the "Red 60 Yards", the Tattersalls sale.

As I could not get her out of my mind, a day or two after the show, I made my way to the Simpsonville, Kentucky stable of Jewel's trainer. My wife and I were working on a sponsor and had settled on a wonderful client who simply loved 5 gaited mares. We had been extremely lucky selecting horses for her in the past and the mare she currently rode was about ready to be replaced. Although she was an older lady and not the very strongest of riders, she had ridden forever, was fearless, looked nice on a horse, liked to go fast and was a great student because she never once "sat on her ears" when she got in the saddle. Thinking about how much this horse might cost, it was also a very good thing that her husband trusted our judgement in horses implicitly. I only had two specific concerns beyond the usual, could my lady learn to ride her and could her husband afford her. Being young, I was fearless as well and assumed I could train and condition her.

I stepped from my truck to a gorgeous Kentucky morning and made my way into the beautiful stables. The trainer greeted me and we compared notes about the show and other small talk about the industry. In a very few moments, Jewel was led out and presented for my inspection. She shined like diamond dust, her tail dragged on the ground at least 2 feet. Her head and neck were as pretty as I remembered them. Her legs were clean and straight. Her quarter boots were a brilliant white and her bridle and bits gleamed. There appeared to be only one thing missing to interrupt this perfection, about 250 lbs! Here in the daylight, it was very plain to see this mare was painfully thin. All the clichés could apply, "count every rib", "hang your hat on her hips", "She should rattle when she walks", etc. (When I finally got home, I looked up the word Emaciated in the dictionary. Jewel's picture

should have been there!) Undeterred, I said, "Let's see her under saddle." Before I could really finish that sentence, three grooms had appeared, saddled her and were making their way to the indoor arena with her. I had to sort of jog to catch up. The trainer got on and after a moment or two of walking, proceeded to thrill me once again as I had been thrilled at the show a few nights before. She was all I had remembered and more as he Trotted and Racked and Slow gaited all around the arena. He would slow gait with one hand and then just let her fly racking. Perhaps thinking it a sales feature he hollered, " You won't have to be wearing any fire extinguishers out with this mare!" It was, in fact, nearly silent in the arena and the now 6 caretakers all pretty much had their hands in their pockets, a convincing sign, she was dead game. It all was going perfectly until I asked how her canter was. He informed me, "She gets a little tight at the canter here at home." Had he forgotten I had been at the show? He cantered. Tight was not the term I would have used. Strong, rapid, speedy, very fast would seem more appropriate. I asked to ride and was once again thrilled with her Trot, Slow gait and Rack and also I found her canter to be even more thrilling than I had thought it would be!

I lined up, dismounted, handed her to her caretakers and we went into to the trainer's office to start the dealing. He handed me a copy of her papers. Although I did not let on, I would not have cared if they said she was out of Tennessee by Boxcar, I wanted her so badly. We each commented on the horses we had known that appeared in her pedigree and finally agreed that she was one of those rare creatures that actually looked and performed as her papers said she should. Although breeders put so much thought, time, and effort in deciding who is bred to whom, it is extremely unusual when one turns out looking like her papers, as this mare had. The issue of her strong canter was the next thing on the table and turned into a "point" for my "side". He did not think that the lady who owned the mare would ever be able to cope with it. I was, secretly and silently cheering inside, thinking this would be a great reason for her to be a very motivated seller. Even back then, I was well aware motivation

directly relates to dollars and cents! Next on the table were my questions about her daily training and what he found good to do with her and bad to do with her. She seemed like a textbook horse to train at all the other gaits. We discussed her stall manners and how she shipped, jogged, trimmed and shod. Next was talk of vetting her and her soundness. That seemed fine but brought us to the next question.....I asked about her weight. The trainer said he concurred and felt she was a little thin but had the answer to the problem. It was not that she was nervous, or fretted or weaved in her stall. It was simply that she did not like to eat. However, he had a new, secret, special tonic to encourage her to eat and he assured me this would be the answer to the problem. She had only been on it for a couple of weeks or so. That seemed to satisfy all the horse questions. There was but one more thing. I dreaded this next moment. I was sure the answer would put me out of the "ballpark"! I grabbed the edge of my chair tightly and just let it slide out, "How much is the lady asking?" His response did in no way stop me.....it did, however, certainly did slow me down. It was not as much as I thought it might be but when a horse costs as much as a house, it does give one pause. Seeing the expression on my face change so drastically, must have made him feel he should add the next beautiful six words, "But she would entertain an offer." My spirits lifted as the door that only moments ago had been slammed in my face opened a crack. There was still hope. As I was leaving and we were shaking hands, I told him I would talk this over with my clients and if they were interested at that level, I would call him about bringing them down to take Jewel for a spin. The five-hour ride home seemed to take no time at all.

Three nights later, Renee and I took our sponsor candidates out to dinner. We had talked this over and truly felt our lady was more than ready to move up to a horse of this calibre and we truly needed someone other than just our daughter to be a star on the National circuit. Although by no means inexpensive, I really felt this mare could be competitive with and beat horses costing much, much more. Our trap was set as we felt confident we could answer any question, explain why we felt this purchase

would be a wise move, tell how wonderful we thought this mare was, remind the lady that she had had a great four years with her current mare but it was time to move on or be her last owner, point out how great she would look on Jewel, etc. etc. Hell we even mentioned how great the lady's colored riding coats would match the mare's color. After that, I went into the "How much did she thrill me? Let me count the ways", story of my trip and then went on to advise them it would require a little time to put she and the lady together with little things like her canter needing some resolve. I coasted lightly over the weight issue, as now that she had a special tonic, it would probably be a non- issue. When there was no more to say, the table grew extremely quiet. The ball was obviously in our court and neither of us really wanted to be the one to impart the next piece of information, the price. The husband was nearing 70...would his heart hold up upon hearing the news? Would they laugh at us or go the other direction, ending a beautiful friendship? Would I be able to say the price without stuttering? I took a deep breath and told them, without a stutter, sputter or shake, the price they were asking. The husband was first to respond, " Let's have another round of drinks." I loved this guy! That night, we tarried and had several more rounds of drinks. After another hour or two of questions, answers, dreams and drinks, we came to a meeting of the minds. We decided we would go down to Kentucky, give the mare a try and if we liked her, bid on her. After many "Highballs" we had even agreed at a "Lowball" bid, as you can't put a deal together if someone doesn't start. I was to make the necessary arrangements and let them know the details.

Later that night when Renee and I had gotten home we marvelled at how fortunate we were to have clients like this couple. They believed in us, were willing to spend more money than they ever had on our say so, and they were genuinely nice people. (He also drank Jack Daniels.) It was all well and good, but the responsibility I felt to really do the right thing for them would weigh on my shoulders for all the future clients like them we would be fortunate to have. After all, one can make a mistake purchasing horse anytime and that is always in your mind. If you

let it become prominent concern, you will make mistakes. I made the arrangements to look at the mare over the weekend. Kentucky here we come!

As we got into the client's car at 5 am, a heavy rain was pouring and a shivering kind of wind seemed to be coming from some open door to Canada. It may have been the middle of June, but you couldn't prove it by me. It was more like the middle of nasty. As often happens on this trip I had made a thousand times, the moment we crossed the Cincinnati x Covington Bridge, it was like Dorothy landing in Oz. The sun came out, the birds were singing, the flowers were blooming, the boats were boating and the cows...well never mind. Jewel's trainer and I had sort of discussed a game plan to present her in the best possible light. Rather than lead her out for examination first, we would forego that part of the "beauty contest" and have our first view of her, under saddle, Racking and Trotting in the arena. He would have a lookout posted to tell when we were coming in the driveway so the trainer could be on the horse when we walked in the arena. He knew that we should arrive around 10:30. We turned into the drive at 10:35. In front of us was one of the grooms at a dead run heading towards the barn shouting for all he was worth, "They here, they here, here they come!" When we past him, we waved, he waved back and continued to shout the warning. We stepped out of the car and I directed them into the arena where I expected to see Jewel Racking and Trotting. Wrong. We headed into the aisle that led to the stable and were stopped by the assistant trainer who said we should go back in the arena as Jewel was just about ready and would be out as soon as they found, " the little, short, pony girth," So much for the best laid plans. We waited. It seemed a long time but I am sure it was only a few minutes and then bursting into the arena she came. She was every bit as wonderful as I remembered and I could not help but notice the smiles on my client's faces. The trainer showed her off to perfection at all her gaits (without the breast collar) as if he were at Louisville. He even figure eighted her at the Slow Gait. He lined her up and asked if the lady would like to ride. Believe me, she wanted to ride. We adjusted her stirrups

the per functionary 4 times before everything felt right, by putting them back in the original hole I had put them at first. The two girls walked off together. It only took a pass or two at the trot to see this could work. The lady seemed absolutely at home on the mare as if she had ridden her a hundred times. She Racked and Totted, even clucking a time or two. The Slow Gait was great as well. We stopped before the canter. She got off and for a moment I thought she was going to hug the mare. Her husband, a very shrewd business man, was about to have the big one, as she started to tell us that this was probably the most fun horse she had ever been on and beamed a smile and then shed some tears. It was when she repeated the whole scenario that I thought I saw her husband's eyes roll back in his head. This was not helping our dealing position at all! The grooms whisked Jewel away from the lady and back to the stable. The trainer took us to the office where he offered us a cold drink. By the time we got to her stall, she was covered with a light cooler and cross-tied. I pointed out how beautiful her head and eyes were and how straight her legs were. The lady did hug her then we said our good byes and headed to the car and I hoped a cocktail and some lunch. We stopped in Covington and had both while we talked the morning over. We talked more on the drive home, and it was decided to wait a day or two (much to the lady's chagrin) and then offer the "lowball" we had settled upon. But, the man said when he and I were alone, "We don't want to lose this horse. Just try to save me as much money as you can."

Two days later, I made the call that started the negotiations. I must say my first stab at "Big Money" negotiation went really well. The "lowball" offer did not seem to be snickered at and all remained very cordial. It was also great to hear the mare was gaining weight rapidly. After about 4 days of back and forth, I was able to purchase the mare for my clients about half way between the original asking price and our low first offer. All was well. After being vetted and paid for, she was in my barn a few days later. The vet found nothing wrong with her but did mention she was in "thrifty" condition.

Thrifty, if anything she was even thinner than she was the week

before. I assumed the van ride burned the calories and, as promised, the secret, magic, guaranteed to work, fat building, elixir arrived with her, in a gallon jug. After jogging her a day or two, I rode her and was thrilled, feeling finally assured I had selected a really good one for my people. After asking some advice on her canter from several great horsemen, I was pleased to hear that the one and the only perfect cure for her problem was to go outside in a very large field and just let her run till she slowed herself down....or... just canter in small circles in a very confined space. So much for the one and only cure! Much like Goldilocks, I tried the large field and found that way to fast for my liking and safety. (I had never gone fast enough to get bugs on my teeth before!) The small circles, proved a bit too difficult to navigate at a high rate of speed. (It is very hard to stay on when you are dizzy!) "Just right" proved to be from a phone call to Darrel Wallen, trainer of the famous trick horse Mr. Rhythm, who explained to me the principals and actual physics of the canter from start to execution and why horses learn to run off. That phone call and his expertise in explaining the issue has helped me with literally hundreds of bad cantering horses through the years. So it did with Jewel in just a few days.

All was going well with one exception, this mare would not eat. Oh, she would pick at her food but not enough to keep a bird alive. The magic tonic did not seem to be doing anything to make her eat. Not the 6 different kinds of good Ohio hay I bought her. Not the 8 different kinds of feed I bought her. Not the beet pulp. Not the sweet potatoes. Not the day old bread or the fresh glazed doughnuts. Even grazing her on a shank did not produce results. Hell, she would not even eat a sugar cube or a peppermint! I called her former trainer who assured me the tonic would kick in given time. I wasn't sure there was much time left but in the meantime could he send that Walking Horse breast collar and the "little, short, pony girth"? Client day was approaching, time for the lady's first ride and I felt it might shake her confidence slightly if she slid off over the mare's tail. My Dad happened by one day while I was long lining Jewel. He put it very succinctly, " Did you buy this mare in Kentucky or

Auschwitz?" We talked about some "old time" remedies to make a horse eat. Although they were a bit dangerous, I was more than willing to try anything. I had blood drawn to see if there was something wrong and of course had her wormed. Nothing. I started looking for the old time chemicals and minerals. Finding them was not easy but I did. After a week or two of that treatment, there was no change. Enter.....Tom Moore!

Although client day was very successful with my lady riding Jewel to perfection with even the canter nearly perfect, it was painfully clear that I was losing the "battle of no bulge!" I could not get this mare to eat and she continued to lose weight. With the Vet and myself having exhausted every possible idea I was now lying awake most of the night after being awakened by nightmares in which Jewel lost so much weight that her head fell off, or the lady sits down in the saddle, the mare just breaks in half. One I especially liked was her former trainer and myself both weighing 500 pounds, getting rip roaring drunk on the gallon bottle of the secret, magic, guaranteed to work, fat building, elixir while Jewel sat at a table eating a T-Bone steak. (With a knife and fork no less!) Or, how about the one where I get her dentures and that solves the problem. These are just the ones I remembered. Things were getting way out of hand! I almost needed to add an addition to the barn to store the various kinds of feed and hay I had purchased for the cause not to mention the bottles of chemicals and medicines from Pepto Bismol to strychnine and belladonna. (To add insult to injury, I had eaten the lion's share of the glazed doughnuts and had gained 5 pounds!) I even found myself seriously giving some thought to getting her some marijuana but wasn't sure she would get the "munchies" if she only ate it and did not smoke it. I gave that up, how would I get her to eat it anyway? Things were not going well there in "Laveryville"! I was at the end of my rope, my back was against the wall. One sleepless 2 AM morning it came to me, why I hadn't thought of it before I couldn't fathom, I would call Tom Moore. For the next several hours, I sat there in the dark staring at the electric alarm clock, waiting for the big hand to reach the 12 and the little hand to reach the 6, a time I felt

certain Mr. Moore would be awake. I thought better and waited until six thirty and started to dial Grape Tree farm the moment the big hand reached the 6. Tom answered the phone and I felt a weight off my shoulders the instant he said hello. He would know what to do! " I hope I haven't gotten you off a horse or something, I could call back" I said. " Lonnie, no I am just about to start but if you thought it important to call me at this hour, then it must be. What is on your mind?" I happily and very rapidly filled him in on the entire story. He asked me to slow down a time or two. When I could think of no more to tell him, I asked if he had any ideas. He asked two questions, how was her second dam bred and was there any difference between the temperatures of her two ears. I told of the breeding and then, very embarrassed and wanting to crawl in a hole, informed the legendary Tom Moore I was not at the barn yet. "No problem, call me back after you feel her ears." That was that. I raced around dressing, ran to the barn and called him back in less than a half hour to inform him I felt no difference in temperature. "Is there anything we can do for this mare?" I asked. "If your willing, we can fix her tomorrow morning." was his answer. To say I was elated would have been an understatement. "Now the procedure is a little bit tricky and there is no room for any mistakes but I think you might be able to do it if you keep very calm and listen to everything I tell you to do." Getting a bit nervous, I said, "What do you mean tricky?" "Nothing don't worry about it, we'll probably be fine. Get these things together for tomorrow morning at this time: a cotton ear twitch, a baker blanket, a pair of blind blinkers or a blindfold, a diabetic syringe and some B-5000, a bottle cap full of DMSO." (And another drug that I just happened to have by chance.) This was making little sense to me but I agreed to get it all together for the morning. He ended the conversation with the following statements: "Make sure you can be on the phone when we do this. Give her no grain or hay in the morning and is the mare insured, if not I'd get a binder on her if it were me." Talk about instilling confidence!

I spent that afternoon gathering all of the items Tom had requested. I went to Radio Shack and purchased what at that time was a revolutionary new phone...wireless so that I could talk to Tom from the stall. Having never used an ear twitch, I had to make a call or two and then was able to fabricate something suitable. I was ready. I went to bed early, slept like a top and was at the barn the next morning at five thirty awaiting the call from the "Guru" of all that was horsey. At six thirty the phone rang and operation "fatten the starved" was about to begin. After making sure I had all the necessary artillery, Tom explained what was going to happen. We would put on the baker blanket, fastened at her wither and hanging like a pair of chaps covering her front legs. (To keep us from being killed by those front feet during the procedure) We would place the "blind blinkers on her. (To keep her from seeing where we were thus not knowing "where" to kill us during the procedure) We would put the ear twitch on her for control. (To keep her from killing us with her head during the procedure) I asked about a nose twitch and he said no but that I could use a lip chain. I would be using a lip chain as well...(I was a bit nervous about being killed during the procedure.) Yes, the procedure. What in the hell could it be that would put my life in this jeopardy? It occurred to me that there was really no "We" involved here at all, he was on the phone and I would be on the "firing" line. Was this something I should be doing? For a few moments right about then, the mare was starting to look a little fatter to me! No..I was going to do this thing. But what was the thing? Tom said, " What we are going to do, (there was that "we" again) is stimulate an acupuncture point with a 3 cc mixture of the DMSO, B-5000 and the other drug." Only because I had just seen something about acupuncture on TV this seemed very logical to me and was, of course, the reason I had to obtain a diabetic needle. No problem. I was up for this. I asked, "Where is this point?"

He replied, "About a centimeter and a half under the skin and at the juncture of the "Y" bone." I never was good at metrics and had no clue where or, for that matter, what the "Y" bone was. I

think he could sense my ignorance over the phone as he added, "The "Y" bone is actually that piece of cartilage that is shaped like that letter, and is positioned between the highest point of the nostrils. It is about the size of a quarter." "Tom," I said, "is this something I should really be doing?" He assured me it was a piece of cake. I drew up the proper mixture in the syringe. I put the blanket on, the lip chain, the blinkers, and then never having used one, asked exactly where he wanted me to put the ear twitch while hoping he wouldn't realize my ear twitch ignorance. His answer, "On her ear!" Oh well... "Now," he said, his voice sounding perfectly clear in the remarkable new telephone that was propped under my jaw. "Feel around for the "Y" bone and find the exact point where the three arms of the Y intersect. That is where you must insert the needle." I was pretty sure I had the spot and began to slide the needle in it. His solemn voice said slowly, "It is very important you hit the exact point. Not too deep or not too shallow. You wouldn't want to make a mistake, one slip and she'll be dead in about a minute and a half." The phone fell to the ground along with the syringe. "What!" I screamed scaring Jewel and the groom handling the ear twitch, which came loose hitting both he and I in the head. I used just about all of George Carlin's words you can't use. Blood from my ear was dripping on the phone as I picked it up to hear Moore nearly roaring with laughter. "I was just teasing about the minute and a half," he said. I replied, "Very funny." I was hot! I drew up another syringe and after asking how deep to push the needle, inserted it in what I was sure was the correct spot. The mare put up a little fuss but I had the feeling Tom had also had a little fun insisting on the precautions I took to avoid certain death. It went surprisingly smooth and was over in seconds. "Now what?" I asked. "Take the stuff off and turn her loose," he replied. "Throw her some hay and grain."

I do not believe Tom had ever finished High School. He came from meager beginnings in Texas. On the telephone, he had just instructed me on treating a horse that would not eat with acupuncture, a science just barely known in the USA at that time. He knew where the point was and knew what medicines

would stimulate the mare's appetite. I found it remarkable. Even more remarkable I stood there and watched Jewel clean up her feed box and then walk over and bury her head in the Hay manger. From that day forward, she ate like a champ, so good in fact, I UPS'ed the magic elixir back to her other trainer along with the breast collar and the little, short, pony girth. My lady had great success with her for several years. Things were good again in Laveryland!