



10 Questions with J.J.

J.J. & Ramona Caldwell are long time Palomino, AQHA & APHA enthusiasts, owners, and amateur exhibitors.

This mother-daughter team work together to accomplish their showing & breeding goals. Everything from hauling & grooming to selecting which horse is shown ultimately falls on their shoulders. J.J. sat down with us and shared their experience(s) showing as amateurs and after years of having their horses in full training, their decision to move their horse operation home.

1. What breed or show circuits do you show on?

I primarily show our yellow horses on the PHBA circuit; however, we are showing the AQHA circuit in both the amateur and amateur select. We plan to show the NSBA circuit next year with about four budding 2-year-old english/western prospects.

2. How many years have you owned and shown horses?

For over 20 years, my mother and I have owned horses. I showed "A" circuit jumpers/ hunters and eventer's as a kid growing up. I developed a liking for dressage in high school and attempted a few hard shows! I seemed to be the one who was at shows primarily but in 2005 my mother acquired two beautiful Palomino conformation horses and she has been on the road ever since! She plans to ride next year for the first time ever in the "Select" events at both AQHA/PHBA/NSBA shows.

3. Prior to setting up your own facility, were you always in a trainer's barn?

Throughout my life, I have always had a trainer. It seemed the best option for my family and for the care of the horses. While I was in high school, I moved into a boarding school in Kent, CT, in order to train under an Olympic trainer. While living there, my mother became really involved with my horses and bought a beautiful farm outside Little Rock, Arkansas. This farm allowed us some flexibility with our horses so that they did not have to stay at the trainers for long periods. All amateurs need a trainer to help with basics and lend a helping



Photo Courtesy J.J. Caldwell, by Jeff Kirkbride

hand, but then you also need to step away at times so you can get to know your horse. I moved to Texas for college and hired yet another trainer who would take me to the next level. Stacey Sample of Stacey Sample Show Horses was a great mentor, trainer, and friend who allowed me to get to a level of showing I never dreamed of. We stayed over 6 years at her barn before moving to our show facility here in Whitesboro, in June of 2009.

4. What were some of the hurdles or concerns about going out on your own as a show barn and an exhibitor?

It can and was a really scary idea to run a barn and show on your own. Although I do still receive regular help and lessons from my trainer both at show and home, the decisions ultimately fall on my mother and I. Owning your own farm and showing the horses that you have raised or bought is a rewarding experience. This is especially true if you are winning. If you are losing in a show pen and don't have a trainer you can talk to, you might second guess yourself. I love running my own barn and deciding who goes to shows and who does not. It seems to allow for more flexibility and less stress at show time. I have really tried to show with my quality horses and leave my quantity for another day!

5. What were some of the benefits of going out on your own?

Being able to run my own show barn outside my home has allowed me to maximize my time with the horses. I have been so blessed that all my horses are outside my back door and no longer driving over 200 miles just to practice for a show. Your biggest hurdle with showing horses and owning is time! The other benefit for me is that because I get to be around my show horses on a daily basis, I have really been able to understand them better at a show. I can ride almost every day whether it is on the trail or in the arena so my performance capabilities have improved. The most fun of being on your own is that you can make the rules... although with that said you now will have a 24-hour job.

6. What have been some of your most rewarding experiences as an amateur?

As an amateur, I have been able to travel from coast to coast showing my horses and have seen some beautiful country. I feel blessed to be able to show all over the place and meet some amazing people who have enriched my life. When you are on the show circuit, your family is a true blessing and they keep me going when I am tired and driving my trailer at some crazy hour in the morning. As an amateur, I have received numerous national high points, won lots of circuit awards, trophies, awards, etc. I believe the most rewarding experience however is that my life has been ultimately changed by a warm pink nose, a soft furry coat, and 4 legs of courage that show me unconditional love on a daily basis.

7. Any disappointments or unexpected events?

YES!! I have, just like any other horse owner, had some big disappointments. To me a disappointment is not the loss of a class but the loss of an equine's life or its ability to perform. Through these catastrophic events, I try to keep a positive attitude and learn from them so hopefully I can avoid them in the future. Sometimes you just can't keep a horse from peril and you just have to regroup with plan B.

8. Who has been your biggest inspiration as an amateur owner & exhibitor either living or dead?

Inspiration from my family came from my grandmother who bought me my first horse. She believed that horses would keep me out of trouble, teach me life lessons, help me assume a sense of responsibility, and ultimately accomplish my goals. Today my mother is my inspiration and my partner with our horse operation. She travels and shows with me so I am never lonely, always well feed, and continually laughing. I am blessed that my mother and I have such a great relationship.

Our biggest inspiration is a woman named Rita Crundwell. She is just awesome and we love her ads. She shows halter, rides english, western, jumps, and has a flourishing stud business. She is an inspiration to all amateurs that with hard work, smart thinking, and a good team you can WIN! My mother and I were fortunate enough to meet her this past year at the Reichert Celebration and purchased two beautiful yearling fillies from her operation.

9. What are some of the short and long-term goals as an amateur exhibitor?

My short-term goals are to continue showing at local PHBA/AQHA shows in halter and performance. Our long-term goals, which I share with my mother, are to continue to qualify for the AQHA world show in Open, Amateur, and Amateur Select events. We will be riding a lot during the next few years in the NSBA sanctioned shows and will move over to show some paints. We will continue to raise, train, show, and sell our babies for years to come!

10. What are your words of wisdom to share with our readers?

Just remember that there are many different ways to ride, train, show, and raise horses. Pick a system that works for you and your horse. Stick with that system! Never stop exploring the horse world and continue to educate yourself in regards to health/vet care, feeding programs, showing, and equine education. Lastly...I challenge everyone who owns horses to volunteer at a therapeutic riding center. That will change your life and the way you look at our equine friends.

Thanks and happy trails, happy hearts, and clean hooves for all. J.J. 🐾

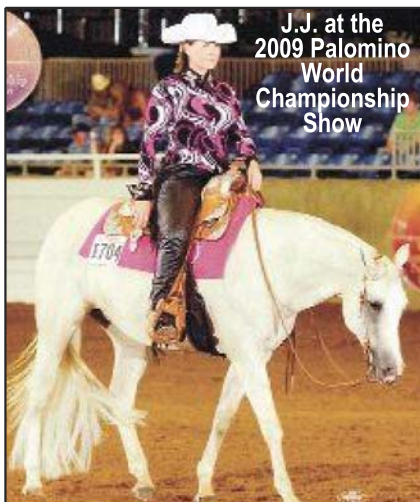


Photo Courtesy J.J. Caldwell, by Jeff Kirkbride

Barker Sweeps All-Arounds at the ABRA World Show

The 22nd Annual A.B.R.A. World Championship Show kicked off July 29 offering five judges and five sets of points to Buckskin, Dun, Red Dun and Grulla competitors at Expo Square in Tulsa, OK. Montana Silversmith Trophy Buckles were awarded to all World Champion and Reserve World Champion winners with Trophy Saddles going to All-Around and Reserve All-Around competitors.

Brittany Barker of Columbus, IN, had the show of a lifetime riding to the Open and Amateur All Around titles with Bud Light Please. Riding to the Reserve Open All Around was Terina Pike of Madison, WI, and Zippos Goldunrod and the Reserve Amateur All Around was Kate Buffa of Silver Lake, WI and Truly Chipped.

Texas took home the Champion Amateur Select title when Julie Dinse of Bandera rode her seasoned pro Roses Moses to the title with wins in both the Amateur Select Trail and the Amateur Select Hunt Seat Equitation. Jill Cook of Fort Collins, CO, rode Don't Touch My Zipper to the Reserve.

For more information and complete results, visit the ABRA website at www.americanbuckskin.org. 🐾