

The Horse Listener

By Jonathan Rojas

Susan Bump's stable holds six horses, which she trains at San Luis Rey Downs. The horse she was caring for when I came by was Le Copain, who was receiving electromagnetic pulsation therapy, via Bump's Papimi machine.

"He was really sore," Bump said, underscoring her personal knowledge of each of her horses and their respective conditions. She claimed him in a race for \$10,000, and he went on to win a race for \$16,000, and then for \$32,000.

"I like to treat each of my horses as individuals," said Susan. "I don't have a set schedule for them per se, because I read them when I'm going to train them, and if one isn't up for whatever workout I have planned, I don't force them."



Bump has always loved horses. She grew up in New York in a small town of farms and dairies where most of her neighbors owned horses.

"All of my friends had one," she recalls. "I'd go to their houses and I really loved riding the horses, and I wanted badly to have one of my own."

Being a girl in a town where labor work was



considered a masculine occupation, her only way to make money was babysitting, for which she made fifty cents an hour. But she kept on saving and by the time she was 15, she had enough to buy her first horse.

"I rode him every day after I bought him," she said. "I was so excited to have a horse of my own."

The love of horses stayed with Bump throughout her childhood and into her adult years. She decided to pursue a career in the horse racing industry. She worked as a horse breaker in Santa Inez, Hollywood Park, Del Mar and Chino, achieving success all along the way.

"Without a doubt, I had the best person teach me to break horses," she recalls, referring to the practice of showing horses how to lead, gallop, and basically anything having to do with preparation for race training.

The man who taught her was the late Walter Macaulay. She was thoroughly impressed with his common sense methods of horse breaking. She directly attributes her success working with horses to his instruction.

Bump broke horses for about eight years before deciding to become a trainer. Feeling that horse breakers don't receive the credit they deserve, Susan was also interested in the actual racing industry, and she wanted to contribute to creating a positive image of the business.

"I think people need to know that there are trainers who love and respect the horses,"

Susan said. "I'm not the sort of person who's going to run them into the ground. I know that like people, these animals have their limits. I would never want to take advantage of them in that way."

In her ten years of training, Susan has enjoyed the process of taking horses that may not be reaching their potential, and turning them into race winners. She recalled one horse, Mythical Flyer, who had been beaten in numerous races.

The horse's owner was unable to see its value and sold it to Bump for a mere \$3,000. She con-



connected with the horse, and found that he was intelligent and sensitive. After three months of training, Mythical Flyer won his first race at Santa Anita, which was one out of the four he would ultimately dominate.

"He's retired now," she said. "I still own him, and I ride him

almost every day."

Bump doesn't subscribe to book methods on how to train horses.

"Each horse is different, and each one requires its own method of training," she said. "One thing I think I do give all of them is a happy existence. My stable and my training is a happy place for them. I don't talk to them; instead I stay quiet and listen. I think that's really what they need."

Her plans for the future?

"Keep maintaining a tight barn, and keep winning races."

