

Reflections

by: Cindy Sturgill

The emotions that had lain dormant in my soul were stirred as, on Thursday afternoon, I drove into the Kentucky Horse Park to attend my first Arabian Horse event in over 35 years, The Straight Egyptian Event presented by The Pyramid Society. Flashbacks were clicking through my mind faster than a camera at a super model's photo shoot. As I drove past the glamorously decorated barns, the panache of yesteryear was not lost on me. These showcases, featuring classic furniture placement; chiffon streamers; garlands; intricately placed desert plants and Persian rugs; ribbons and trophies demonstrating the accomplishments of each stable; and larger-than-life posters displaying the beauty, the magic, and the majesty of the Straight Egyptian Arabian Horse were spectacular.

As I entered the covered arena, I audibly gasped as these "drinkers of the wind" singularly entered the show ring exhibiting their strength, personality, and charm as if to say, "Yes, I am stunning to observe! Yes, I am elegant in my movement! and, Yes, I love that you are here to admire me!" As they were brought to the area to be judged on confirmation, I studied their handlers, masters of their craft, as they contorted themselves in an effort to entice the most classic of arching necklines, perked ears, and raised croup while simultaneously striking the regal pose for which this breed is known worldwide. Choking back tears in an attempt to remain composed, the thought of, "I miss my father," resonated in my mind and in my heart. Allowing a few moments for the sentiment of this moment to pass, I collected myself and began my search to locate the lady who invited me to this event and, has since, become my mentor and my friend, Beverly Smith-Embry, owner of Smith-Embry Insurance (www.insurehorses.com).

Once located, she greeted me with a warm smile and introduced me to her daughter, Denise. The warmth of hospitality the pair of them shared with me was remarkable. Every person to whom I was introduced exhibited the same graciousness towards me. The Pyramid Society welcomed me into their fold with open arms. I shall always remember their charm and generosity of time and kindness.

As the show ended that afternoon, we escorted ourselves to the barns to enjoy the parade of regal beauty that was brought before us. There, I was introduced to the owners and handlers who are fortunate enough to spend time every day with their horses, or, should I say, extended members of their families. When the horses were brought forth from gilded stalls, they knew exactly what they were there to do: bond with the spectators on a level that other breeds can rarely connect. The manner in which these horses draw you to them is not unlike a moth drawn to the light. There is a sanctuary to be found in their presence, and, for the few moments one gets to touch, nuzzle, and look into the eyes that are looking back into yours, the Earth stops spinning. There is peace. There is serenity. There is tranquility. This feeling can be matched by none other in the entire Universe. This interaction begs the question, "Do we pick the Arabian breed to fall in love with, or does the Arabian breed pick us?"

As I returned to my car, I reflected upon the magical hours of the Cinderella day I had just experienced. In that moment of stillness, I caught myself looking upward into the starlit sky overlooking Lexington while feeling a warmth encircling my entire existence. That was the beautiful smile of my father as I felt his arms embracing me from wherever you may believe the afterlife lays. We shared a moment that was as realistic as if he was with me in the flesh. In harmony, we had unearthed the tranquility that had been absent from our hearts for so many years because, his daughter, had finally found her way back home.