

Victoria Surr

Manchester, NH

WHEN THE CLOCK STRIKES

five on a crisp Manchester, NH, morning, while many of us are still sound asleep, Victoria Surr is wide awake beginning her day. Victoria's days are filled with everything horse-related, just as she prefers. As she described, "I have spent a long time making my life what it is, so I can do what I want to do." And what she wants to do is contribute all of her time and energy to the equine industry, both personally and professionally.

Like many nine-year-old girls, Victoria used to beg for riding lessons. The passion Victoria held for horses at age nine remains constant and true to this day. Her first horse was an old Pinto horse when she was 12, followed by a Morgan which became her true love. Victoria described the Morgan's disposition and personality as the primary characteristics with which she fell in love. Later, it was the community and people within the Morgan breed that "hooked" her, and she has spent her life enjoying Morgan horses.

Early in life Victoria owned a Morgan mare named Symantha, whom she purchased from Oakland Farms. During the 1960s, Victoria showed in 4-H and local shows in every class that she could take her mare in, from driving to English pleasure to Western pleasure. Her passion grew for horses, as did her knowledge and experience. For a short period of time Victoria even worked at a race-track, where she "learned a lot about legs."

For the past decade, Victoria has spent the majority of her horse career at the end of a set of lines. She became interested in driving when she purchased a mare by the name of UC Rianna from Elsie Rodney. Victoria planned on using Rianna as a riding horse, but Elsie insisted, "You have got to drive that mare!" With the great respect Victoria holds for Elsie, describing her as a "huge influence" on her equine life, she did just that. Elsie



loaned Victoria a harness and carriage for her first few driving events. Victoria and UC Rianna went on to have an award winning career in driving.

In recent years, Rianna has been in the winner's circle many times. Victoria and Rianna made a wonderful team and were quite successful in the Morgan carriage division for many years. Victoria recognizes Elsie, Jeff Morse and Gino Guaraldi for all their guidance and assistance which has contributed to her success with Rianna.

Currently, Rianna is 23 years old and enjoying a privileged life as a lesson horse in a therapeutic riding program. Fortunately for Victoria, Rianna passes on her athleticism to her offspring. Freedom First is a son of Rianna, whom Victoria owns, drives and began showing this past year. In his first show season, Freedom First (Fred) is already carrying on his dam's legacy by receiving the Northeast Morgan Carriage Pleasure Driving Open Champion title, which Rianna won the previous year. Victoria is enjoying her new driving partner very much. She is excited for her future with Fred in open carriage competitions; possibly some combined driving events, but still remains very loyal to carriage pleasure driving. Victoria enjoys the diversity of classes in pleasure driving, as well as the sense of community among

drivers. Though Fred is still perfecting his obstacle skills, Victoria does not mind knocking balls down. "Every time balls hit the ground, I would laugh and laugh harder," she said. Outside of the show ring, Victoria and Fred enjoy slowing down and spending time on drives with the Granite State Carriage Association in the beautiful New England countryside. The scenery often includes a variety of animal sightings. Victoria described a recent encounter with a moose, which Fred did not mind sharing the trail with at all.

Along with her many accomplishments in the show ring, Victoria also makes great contributions to the equine industry in her professional life. Victoria owns Freedom Rider, a company dedicated to enabling people to do more with their horses, particularly individuals with disabilities. Freedom Rider products can be found both online and in their print catalog.

Whether Victoria is at the horse show or sitting in front of her computer at home, she continues to make special mark on the horse world. The future is bright for Fred and Victoria. She plans on making her way to Oklahoma City within the next five years for the Morgan Grand National and World Championship Horse Show. Between taking care of her horses, running her own business and the multiple volunteer positions she holds, it is easy to see why Victoria Surr wakes up at 5 am every morning.

Victoria Surr
and UC Rianna

■ RACHAEL BROWN