



Hello--my name is Brian Coss, and recently I accepted the position on the ASAV board as your regional representative. I would like to introduce myself and give you an idea of my background with Shagya horses. I am married to Beata, who is from Hungary and who interned on the farm, Lily Creek Ridge, owned by my mother, Donna. I reside in Manassas, Va. and work for the Federal Government in information and media in downtown, D.C.

I grew up around horses and used them as a means of transportation to get to a friend's home, riding through corn and soybean fields and lots of gravel and dirt roads. I did not take horses seriously until Beata purchased a Thoroughbred mare and began a pursuit of dressage.

We live in the beautiful Virginia countryside, where one can ride for miles on public and private trails. One of our prime trail riding areas is the Bull Run battle field.

Beata and I had traveled to Hungary where I toured some of the horse farms and when I expressed an interest in having my own horse to ride, Lily Creek Stetson, entered my life, as a gift from my Mom. Stetson was a stallion and had been on lease for a year in Virginia, but the plan was to freeze semen and turn him into a mild-mannered gelding. This went as planned and Stetson became my private mount and for the past two years the two of us have learned together.

He is the perfect mount for me as he is playful, but dependable, and he has a brain and he trusts me! He tries very hard to please and the two of us have been on a journey that has taken us on many trails and over many terrains. He loves to jump and here in Virginia it is common to jump in and out of fields. He loves this except one morning we jumped into a field with a herd of cattle! He came to an abrupt halt and I scrambling to stay on his back! But, as is typical of this breed, he just had to stand and think about the situation, and finally decided they were no threat to either of us.

Beata and I attended the ASAV annual meeting at Darlene Stevens farm in Kentucky in April of '08 and met many enthusiastic people, many who were interested in endurance and distance

riding. This was interesting to me and I headed back to Virginia where I attended clinics and assisted in the vetting procedure at some of the rides.

I journeyed out to Indiana in the summer and was fortunate to spend two days with Joe and Michelle Mattingly, both who are FEI endurance people and both have won many championships. I soaked up much knowledge and am very thankful for their sharing. Joe and Michelle also have Shagyas and recently purchased three weanlings, from Lily Creek, one of them a purebred colt!

Stetson and I began riding with the purpose of getting both of us in shape and did our first LD ride, this summer, which was challenging for both of us, but guess you would say we were “hooked”!

In October we entered the Fort Valley LD of 30 miles and had 26 or more horses to compete against. The ride is over much of the Old Dominion trail and takes one through belly deep water, very steep, boulder covered hills. It was also gully washing, pouring rain! Stetson has a fast, long stretching trot that he seems to be able to do for miles and it is very easy to sit. Before we realized it we were side by side with another rider and came in together. Stetson pulsed down before the other horse and we had come in first at this ride. Stetson appeared unfazed and seemed capable of easily doing more miles.

I find that the Shagya has the bred in qualities for distance riding without the reflex flight action of many purebred Arabians. They really do spook in place and prefer to reason it out first. This makes them ideal for endurance as they do not use energy reacting to stimulus and like Stetson and I, we trust each other, as they are “people” horses!

Stetson and I will be continuing our endurance endeavor in 2009 and by the way, I am in the market for a saddle upgrade!

As your regional director, I would very much like to hear from the ASAV members in the S.E. region. Send me your photos, stories about your horses and/or videos. What activities are you interested and participating in? We use brooms for polo playing!

The 2009 ASAV annual meeting will be in Bend, Oregon on May 1-2-3 and the emphasis will be on “distance riding” with a round table presentation. I will be attending, funds willing. Hope to meet many of you soon!

Brian Coss