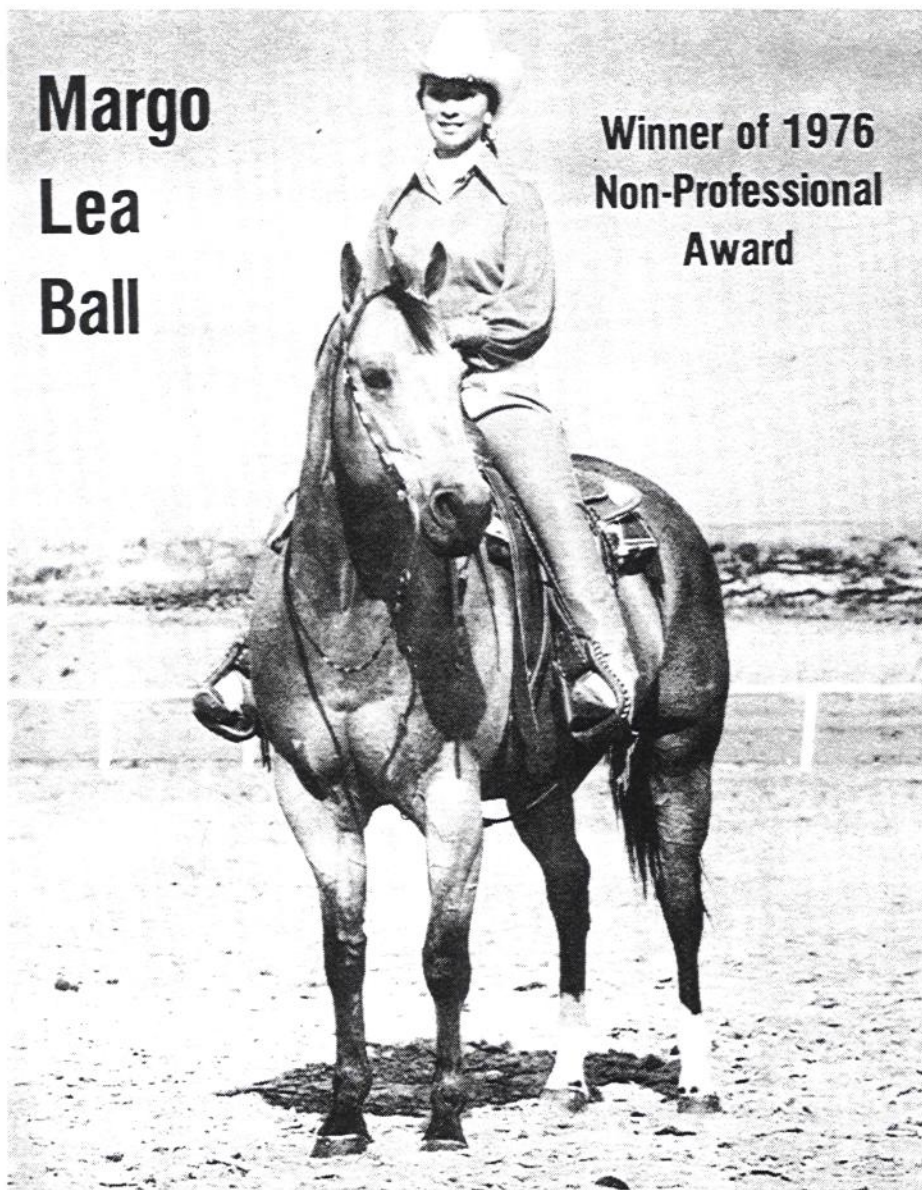


Margo Lea Ball

Winner of 1976 Non-Professional Award



The RMQHA, year-end award, honoring the outstanding Non-Professional member of the association, has been won for the second time by Fort Collins, Colorado resident, Margo Lea Ball. While still in Youth Activities, Margo competed successfully for the 1972 Non-Professional buckle on her sorrel gelding, OKLAHOMA TWISTER. But of the better than 400 trophies, buckles, and saddles won in her years of competition, this is perhaps the most fulfilling and rewarding achievement. For most exhibitors there is, or has been, a very special horse. For Margo, it is her outstanding buckskin mare, JILL'S LADY JANE. A mare whose record as a Youth Activities horse is familiar to all exhibitors on the RMQHA circuit. But more important than that record, and the trophies, and the year-end High Point awards, is the very special relationship between Margo and JANIE. That the mare is an AQHA champion and has a life time total of over

125 points in open and amateur divisions in seven classes is impressive. When added to her 200 plus youth points in nine classes and a AQHA Youth Championship, it reflects a highly competitive record on a national level. It also reflects versatility, heart and a desire to please that makes champions, and makes one-half of a winning combination. When such desire, mutual respect and love exist between horse and rider, it is possible to set and to achieve such goals as the 1976 Non-professional award. It is particularly satisfying to Margo because it also belongs to JANIE.

Though most readers are aware that JANIE and Margo have shared High-point Youth awards, "Top Ten" National Youth honors, and points in 9 events, not everyone is aware that JANIE came back to the show circuit after raising two colts. Owned at that time by Kathy Calar of LaPorte, Colorado, JANIE was bred to Frank Dickinson's SILKY FOX, by

RAPID BAR. After foaling a fine buckskin colt in 1972, the mare was rebred. In 1973 her foal was a bright bay SILKY FOX colt. When Margo purchased JANIE in 1973, Rapid Fox was turned out at Ball's QUARTERHORSES to grow up . . . and out, while his mother went back into training. As evidenced by her willingness to work . . . and to win . . . JANIE was apparently glad to see the last of her broodmare duties. And each year that passed she got better and better, and worked harder and harder. And Margo was able to make a run at the Non-Professional award in 1976 on the mare she most wanted it for. Each point represented concentration and dedication on the part of both horse and rider . . . and it wasn't always easy. Although a natural Western Riding horse, it took persuasive and loving tactics and a lot of patience to guide the mare through a long season, competing in seven events. Classes consisted of open Western Riding, both open and amateur Reining, open and amateur English and Western Pleasure. When the season was over, and the points were tallied, JANIE and Margo had won the Western Riding and the amateur Reining for 1976, and placed consistently in the open and amateur pleasure classes. With a total of 57 points, 42½ of which were used in calculating the requirements, JANIE and Margo had their buckle. The point margin was relatively slim, testifying to the number of good horse-rider combinations in the non-professional category; Margo and JANIE were in good company in 1976.

It is difficult to be objective with regard to horses, and to people. Objectively, the points are there . . . the saddles and trophies, the ribbons and plaques . . . in numbers too great to recount. What is not immediately apparent, is the intangible bond of communication, the sharing of experiences, the hard work and the partnership between one horse . . . and one girl. It is these intangibles that make the long-range goals possible. The Non-Professional Buckle is a team trophy. The team is Margo and JANIE. They will be back in 1977. JANIE wouldn't have it any other way. Next year she will be sharing trailer space with young RAPID FOX.

After only three months of riding, RAPID FOX is proving to be his mama's boy by placing second in a large English Pleasure class at the Colorado State Fair. Whether he will prove to have the stamina, the desire and the competitiveness of his dam will have to be proven in the same kind of demanding, double-use, hard knocking schedule that JANIE thrives on. The truism is . . . good horses have good mothers. RAPID FOX may even have a great one. JILL'S LADY JANE, owned, campaigned and loved by Margo Ball.

By Barbara Manthos