

# Women operate Arabian horse farm

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS  
Staff Correspondent

CENTERPORT — Do you like lots of horses, dogs and cats? If the answer is yes, you would love to visit the brown barn sitting on a hill above Centerport. Owner and operated by four devoted animal lovers, the stables of the Spatz family features Arabian horses, boxer dogs, a Doberman, a pug, and many, many cats. It also displays female dominance, female labor, and the female love for animals.

Although Dolores, "Dolly" Spatz, owns the farm her daughter, Rita, and friend, Mary Jo Brown, are the principle operators of the boarding stables and breeding operation. With 11 horses of their own, three ponies, and several "boarders", the two girls are working on expanding their business to include more training of outside horses. Still mostly a hobby, the girls devote all of their spare time to training and selling their young stock and mating their mares.

Both girls are sold on Arabian horses. They do a lot of trail riding and insist on training all of their horses to travel quietly in trailers, pass by any obstacles, and give a smooth, pleasurable ride. According to the girls, Arabians are the only breed of horse that meets their requirements.

"It has to have good conformation," Mary Jo says about selecting a horse.

"It must be an Arabian," Rita adds.



Mary Jo stands with her favorite, Jazz. One of Copy's daughters, Jazz is a dapple grey, half-Arabian mare.



Rita Spatz prepares a shoe to fit the horse at her anvil. Her favorite boxer, Tabor, stays with her constantly.

According to Mary Jo Arabians are versatile and can satisfy anybody's needs in a horse.

The girls are working hard to establish a small, selective Arabian breeding farm. One of the highlights in the barn is the dapple-grey, Egyptian-bred stallion, Fa-Rousse Black Copy. "Copy" is Rita's pride and joy and is ridden solely by her.

Trained her competitive trail riding, Rita and Copy took fourth place ribbons in their first try at competition last summer. A show winner before he was retired to stud service, "Copy" reigns as king over the mares at the stables and also services a few select outside mares each year.

"Dorana", a Crabbet-bred Arabian, belongs to Dolly and is

another highlight of the farm. "Dorana" recently gave birth to a black colt by Copy, whom the girls have high hopes for.

Rita comes with a knowledgeable background on animals. A veterinary assistant for nine years with a local veterinarian, Rita splits her time between the busy clinic and her stables. She also spent three years supervising her father's feed mill operation in Centerport. A horse and pony person for her entire life, Rita says horses are her first love. Her first pony, Bobby, purchased by her father when she was five years old, still resides on the farm. Rita's two nieces, Amy and Laura, enjoy riding Bobby with Rita.

In addition to being a veterinary

(Turn to Page B4)



Rita and Mary Jo take care of all the barn chores themselves. They also built a riding ring to use for training this past winter.



Mary Jo and Rita sit with their dogs and Lester, the cat who thinks he's a dog. Rita raises the boxers and the Doberman belongs to Mary Jo.



Rita stands with the pride of her stable, Fa-Rousse Black Copy, and Egyptian-bred Arabian stallion.

# Homestead Notes