

Tim Phillips

Master,

Trainer &

Showman



By Marilyn Rice

Photo by Photo Fast

“It is about having the audience admire the run, showing what the animal can do and doing the best you can, together, so people will respect the animal.”

Tim Phillips

The talented and successful mule, donkey and horse trainer/showman Tim Phillips of Caldwell, Idaho, is the best-kept secret in the equine world. He has successfully trained mules and donkeys for all around performance for many years with little recognition outside of the show arena. You the reader deserve to know about this modest dedicated trainer who enjoys most working with mules and or donkeys. He enjoys working with them to develop their individual strengths and then to broaden those strengths to become capable of all around skills and performance. More about his training approach later. If you are not familiar with “all around” competition, a good example happened a few years ago at Bishop Mule Days. He showed Tuff Stuff in dressage, jumping, and Western pleasure; trail class, reining, cow working, cutting, team penning, team roping, pleasure driving and obstacle course driving. Not all of these classes counted toward all around high point but you get the picture. Needless to say Tuff Stuff was high point all around winner that year too. You can see that it takes considerable talent, diligence, patience and special understanding of mules and donkeys to accomplish this year in and year out with many different animals. He’s won championships at

Bishop Mule Days many times with mules beginning with Domino, then Cheers, Chester, Hot Cocoa, Royal Anne, Tennessee Moonshine, Dark Shadow Peggy Sue, Cierra and many others, including ten all around high point championships to date with Tuff Stuff. He has won numerous green English, green western, English western and reserve championship titles and C More Donk was national champion donkey for several years. While Tuff Stuff is an exceptionally talented mule and he and Tim make an unusually coordinated team, Tim has been successful with many other mounts at other big shows. He’s been to the Houston Mule and donkey show thirteen times and won many championships there. (See Houston 2007 results in this issue).

What Makes Tim So Successful?

Tim would tell you that he genuinely enjoys working with mules and donkeys. He respects their intelligence, their self preserving need to check things out and figure things out and their remarkable athletic abilities. It is this respect that he has for these animals that drives his show-

manship success he says, “It is about having the audience admire the run, showing what the animal can do, doing the best you can together so people will respect the animal.” Mules and donkeys have suffered from myths about stubbornness, laziness, etc. and he wants people to respect these animals for their intelligence, athletic abilities and versatility.

He likes taking young mules and teaching and making something of them. He enjoys seeing and feeling the changes as they figure out how to move and learn. He starts them with lots of round pen work so he can observe their movements, teach them how to move, observe how they respond to training, how they learn and where their buttons are before he ever mounts them. It is in this round pen work that Tim senses when the mule reaches a point in which he will “give to you”, is “willing to go with you” which is necessary before training can progress. He insists that each mule walk, trot and lope saddled, on the bit and in frame before he ever mounts them. He emphasizes that with this round pen work he is beginning to build, it is the basis of his work with them. He enjoys observing the young one’s progress their growing and changing and knowing when to ask for more, when to push and not push and assessing



Tim and "Domino" won World Champion Western and Reserve World Champion English from 1991 to 1994. "Domino" was the first mule Tim trained

what they can mentally and physically handle in order to progress. He cautions readers to really understand that it takes mules far longer to trust their handler than horses, that is why he likes mules, it is a challenge to get their trust and to bring it

out. He says he learned a lot more about mules when he trained his first donkey, C More Donk. He understood where a mule's cautiousness about trust, their intelligence and their need to figure things out before doing them comes from, it's

from their donkey parent. He says training the first donkey was the best thing he ever did for improving his work with mules. Mules can get bored with repetition once they have mastered a lesson so working with a variety of activities and skills keeps their interest and his. That is another reason he enjoys all around competition so much.

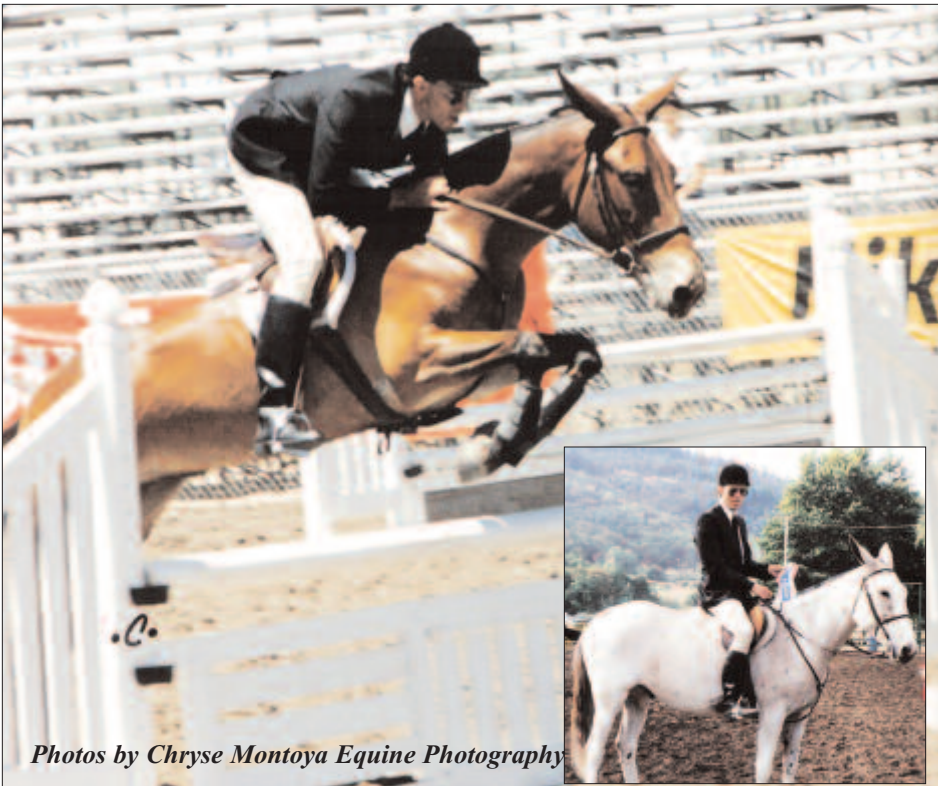
He also wants readers to know that mules need "down time" after show events and after a season of showing. He provides that time for mules to be mules, out of the stall and in pasture, between shows. He also stresses that when riders take their mules to new situations, stalls, show rings, etc. that mules and donkeys need time to investigate their surroundings and make sure they feel comfortable, it takes a lot longer than for horses. He also stresses that mules need to be physically conditioned for the activity that you are doing with them. He notices that people take them out of the pasture or barn with little conditioning and ask them to do difficult things. He says that because mules are strong that some people don't recognize the pain and damage they are inflicting on their mule.

When showing, Tim says it is his

Gentleman

biggest challenge to get the mule or donkey to peak in his/her abilities for a show. He says it varies for each animal and it is critical to get the animal to be at his/her best at the show, not ill prepared and not burned out. It is a real challenge to prepare for so many events and bring the mule to the peak of his/her potential in each of these events for a show.

If you observe Tim at a show, he can often be seen talking with other participants and when asked, offering suggestions or advice. He is congenial, well liked and respected and always a gentleman. He is always in demand for team sorting. He always gives his best effort to every mule in each event even when competing in the same class against one of his own mounts. He is very ethical in showing and in his relationships with owners of the animals he is showing. His clients will tell you his word is good. He is intense at shows but always a gentleman.



Photos by Chryse Montoya Equine Photography

Tim jumping with "Uncle Chester" and Tim along with Joanne and Bob Bentley with "Uncle Chester" in front of the Bishop Mule Days sign. Tim and "Uncle Chester" won World Champion Western Performance, World Champion High Point Mule and Reserve Champion English Performance Mule from 1995 through 1997.

Family

Tim says that being a trainer and showman is a way of life. It's not a nine to five and go home and forget it job. The pressure of caring for the animals and training them is always there. He can be gone from home a lot too. He is a dedicated family man and believes it is very important to spend time with his wife and two children. He coaches his boy's soccer team and makes sure to attend his daughter's dance recitals. He attributes a lot of his success to the support he has from his family, his wife, children and parents. He knows he has God given talent and that family support is and has been very important to him.

Growing Up

Tim came by his connection with horses, mules and donkeys and appreciation of all around performance at an early age. His mother relates that he was riding a

horse by himself at the age of two. The family had horses, developed the Idaho Horse Show Association and showed their animals nearly every weekend. Tim won his first trophy at age six. These shows were all around competitions starting with halter events and moving through English and western performance events and games. Tim did them all. His family provided him with lots of lessons, both English and western when he was growing up. He participated in 4H and FFA, competed in cutting and roping in high school and went to Northern Wyoming Community College in Wyoming where they had an outstanding equine program, which included dressage and reining. He was also on the collegiate judging team. Tim began his journey with mules at twenty-three years of age when the family farrier asked him to train a white mule he had named Domino. Tim took the mule on as a challenge and ended up showing him at Bishop Mule Days, winning many championships. He got his first donkey when an in-law asked him to find him a good donkey. Tim found C More Donk for him, trained him, learned a lot from him and rode and drove him to many national championships.



Tim working in a cattle class in 1999

What's Next?

This year, 2007, Tim competed at the Denver Stock Show and at the Houston Stock Show winning all around and reserve champion at both places with Peggy Sue and Cierra and placing well with the jack Redman's Back N Black. He plans to compete at Bishop Mule Days this year and will be riding Tuff Stuff again as well as several other mounts. Following that he will compete at Winnemucca. He says that is a relaxed enjoyable show. As he has in years past he

will be going home after Winnemucca to focus on the ABRA Buckskin World Show where he has competed and made several world championship horses, plus the APHA where he has helped make two world champions and has ridden numerous paint horses to high point awards. Tim will continue to train, show, give lessons to people, riding animals he has trained, judge for shows in his region and maintain the high standards he's always had.

Tim's Contribution

Tim believes his major contribution to the mule and donkey world has been to raise the performance standard that mules and donkeys can be held to. He has demonstrated their intelligence, athletic abilities and versatility in the show ring over many years. By doing this he has helped people to expect more of their mules and donkeys. He wants everyone to appreciate and respect these intelligent and capable animals as much as he does.



Photo by Ira Gostin

*Tim Phillips and "Tuff Stuff"
Bishop Mule Days 2006*



Photos by Photo Fast



Tim riding "Tuff Stuff" in 2006 along with owners Ron and Brenda Overton who are receiving the award for World Champion All Around High Point Mule.

Tim and "Tuff Stuff" have won this award in 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.



Photo by Anne Phillips Gahley

Tim driving "C More Donk", World Champion Donkey All Around Of Show 2006, owned by Ronnie Lammey.

Show Records

Domino owned by Warren Sohrakoff

1991 Reserve World Champion High Point Mule, Reserve World Champion English

1993 World Champion Western Performance

1994 Reserve World Champion English Performance Mule

1994 World Champion Western Performance Mule

1994 Reserve World Champion English Mule

Tuff Stuff owned by Ron and Brenda Overton

1995 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)

1995 Reserve World Champion Western Green Mule

- 1995 World Champion Green Mule English
- 1996 Reserve World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)
- 1996 World Champion Western Green Mule
- 1998 World Champion Mule (all around of show)
- 1998 World Champion Western Performance Mule
- 1998 World Champion English Performance Mule
- 1998 Reserve World Champion Cow Working Mule
- 1999 World Champion Mule (all around of show)
- 1999 World Champion Western Performance Mule
- 1999 Reserve World Champion cow Working Mule
- 2000 World Champion Mule (all around of show)
- 2000 World Champion Western Performance Mule
- 2000 World Champion English Performance Mule
- 2001 World Champion Mule (all around of show)
- 2001 World Champion Western Performance Mule
- 2001 World Champion English Performance Mule
- 2001 Reserve World Champion Cow Working Mule
- 2002 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)
- 2003 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)
- 2004 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)
- 2005 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)
- 2006 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)

Hot Cocoa owned by Ron and Brenda Overton

- 1997 Reserve World Champion Western Green Mule
- 1997 Reserve World Champion English Green Mule

Royal Anne owned by Ron and Brenda Overton

- 1998 Reserve World Champion English Green Mule
- 1999 Reserve World Champion Mule (all around of show)
- 1999 World Champion Western Green Mule
- 1999 World Champion English Green Mule
- 1999 World Champion Green Cow Working Mule
- 2000 World Champion English Green Mule

Cheers owned by Joanne and Bob Bentley

- 1996 Reserve World Champion western Green Mule
- 1996 World Champion English Green Mule
- 1997 World Champion High Point Mule (all around of show)
- 1997 World Champion Western Green Mule
- 1997 World Champion English Green Mule
- 2000 Reserve World Champion English Performance Mule (not shown by Tim)

Cheers owned by Connie Lara

- 2001 Reserve World Champion English Performance Mule (not shown by Tim)

Uncle Chester owned by Joanne and Bob Bentley

- 1995 World Champion western Performance Mule
- 1996 World Champion High Point Mule (all around)
- 1996 World Champion Western Performance Mule
- 1996 Reserve World Champion English Performance Mule
- 1997 Reserve World Champion Mule (all around of show)
- 1997 World Champion Western Performance Mule
- 1997 Reserve World Champion English Performance Mule

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YOU ALL THERE!**
Ben & Meta Tennison
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