

## TRAIL Program

The Trail Riding Program continues gaining popularity as five new members were added to the program since the Show issue. During the same period RMHA Trail Program riders added another 14,000 miles, bringing the total mileage to 112,278 accumulate since the beginning of the program.

"Rabbit" (DbIO Choco Easter Rabbit), owned and ridden by Mary K. Church (See Beating the Odds) became the second Tobe Award winner, less than a year after "Harley" (Lady Ashley's Harley D) owned and ridden by Cindy Pravda became the first 5,000 mile Tobe award horse.

## 5,000 Mile 2009 Toby Award Winner

**"Rabbit" (DbIO Choco Easter Rabbit), owned and ridden by Mary K. Church**



The RMHA Trail/Pleasure Riding Program has a new award to honor riders who achieve the 10,000 mile level in the program. This cold cast bronze trophy was made especially for the RMHA by Esther Benedict of Sculptures by Esther Benedict located in Texas. The trophy is a perpetual

Tammy Shoremount missed out on a 1,000 mile story when she blew right through it, posting over 2,000 miles on an eight week ride from the Mexican to Canadian border and her 1,000 plus mile story Rock of Ages here tells of her great ride.

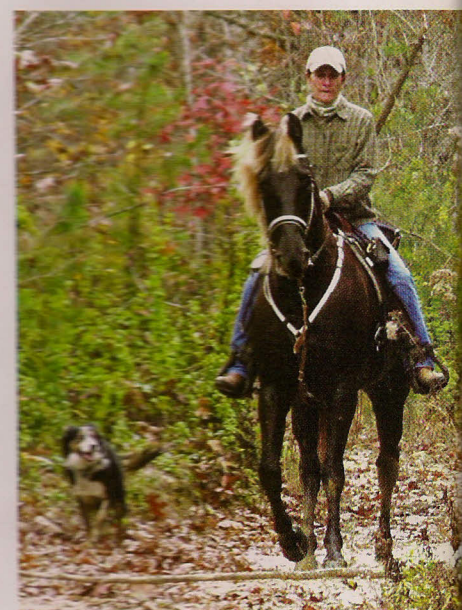
The RMHA has added the Competitive & Endurance Riding Program to their numerous programs for Rocky Mountain Horse owners. For those interested in this great sport check the website at [www.rmhorse.com](http://www.rmhorse.com) under Events and Programs.

Welcome to new members Sandra Lutz, Heide Rose Macdonald, Tammy Oremount, Sandra Shauger and Ellen Styers.



trophy that will be kept at the RMHA office with nameplates of the riders and the year they achieve 10,000 miles. The first rider to do this since the beginning of the program in 2003 was Gloria Northcote.

Each recipient of the award will also receive an individual plaque.



Mary Church and "Rabbit"

## Beating the Odds

By Mary K. Church

There was a time when I would not have dreamed of ever writing a 1,000 mile story for the Trail Program about "Rabbit" (DbIO Choco Easter Rabbit), considering that "Rabbit" was near death with a grave bout of EPM as a yearling. It is an understatement to say that even in my wildest dreams I wouldn't have thought I would be writing an article with "Rabbit" as a 5,000 mile Tobe award winner. Needless to say he is now my "main ride". I have retired from teaching, with two goals for daily living: 1) no alarm clock; 2) ride. I accomplish both those goals most days

I am thankful to live in a rural area in north Missouri where I can ride from my own barn, thanks to light traffic on our gravel road, and good neighbors. In addition to that gravel road, we ride in row crop field waterways and perimeters, in cattle pastures, and on the 4-lane right-of-way. Rabbit is a "push-button" gated horse in the pastures; I rarely dismount to open a gate. I am also fortunate to have public Corp of Engineers ground a short haul away. Our local chapter of Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen has adopted the multi-use trails there and Rabbit is my usual mount for clipping and lopping branches, picking up trash with a grabber (again, no dismounting), and

marking the trails with tree paint.

In addition to local riding, we travel to our favorite horse camps in southern Missouri and Illinois with our riding buddies several times a year. A destination last year was West Virginia, and we have just recently returned from Smokey Mountains and South Fork in Tennessee. It is amazing to me that a yearling colt that was too sick to get up on his own, now has the stamina to conquer hills and rivers, and to traverse narrow, rocky trails winding around a mountain. However, Rabbit is not a horse for someone who wants to be a passenger, as he continues to be "full of himself" and strong-willed as ever. He is a horse for someone who wants a mount with a lot of personality, agility, smooth gait, and plenty of resilience—a horse that has beat the odds for all that. That someone is me.

