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To whom it my concern,

I would like to nominate Sue Merchant for Horseman of the Year. As a show secretary for many years, I have seen exhibitors come and go. Sue supported her daughter's showing career for many years. Sue took over the reins when her daughter went to college. She is, and always has been, a great supporter our club shows. She never complains about how many were in her class, who the judges placed, or the condition on the grounds. She just does her thing. She is a wonderful person, parent, competitor, and truly deserves to be Horseman of the Year.

I asked her husband Dennis to write a bio and here is what he had to say:

Sue's involvement with horses started when her parents gave her a choice in 1973 between going to the Santa Barbara Fiesta parade or taking horseback riding lessons at U.C.S.B. with her friend Charlene. We all know which choice she took. Charlene and Sue started riding Charlene's pony and they shared a quarter horse named "Ribbon".

At the age of 13, Sue assumed the care of a quarter horse named Poco while the owner was out of the country for a year. That year continued until she was a senior in high school. She worked hard to pay for half of the horse's upkeep. It was during this time that she was introduced to horse showing and started winning ribbons and awards in the local horse shows.

Sue attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and graduated with honors and a Bachelor Of Science Degree in Animal Science. She planned on going on with her studies and becoming a veterinarian. I met Sue in the spring of 1987 in Santa Ynez where she was attending a bridal shower and that pretty much ended the idea of going to vet school. We got married in March of 1988 and took up residence in Santa Ynez. First thing on her mind was to find another horse so she could start showing again. We found her a nice Palomino named Blondie and she started hitting all the local shows. During this time she wanted to get a young Paint Horse that she could train and start showing in Paint Shows. We found a gelding that was from Stage Light and she started working with "Maverick" (No Paint from Pop). She had a lot of help from her friend Vicky and wanted to learn everything she could. She started showing Maverick at the local shows and started to see her hard work starting to pay off.

In late 2000 we purchased "Indy" (Two Timin Date) from the Fords in Las Vegas. She worked hard to get Indy ready to show at the Paint Horse shows. The first year did not go as well as she wanted to and she was starting to get a little discouraged. She had a couple of different trainers assess Indy and they told her she was too hot to show. Sue was not one to give up. Sue started training with Pam Turnbull around 2001 and between them they finally found Indy's niche, Trail.

In 2002 things really came together for Sue and Indy. She became a PCHA Open Champion in Trial and Horsemanship. She won numerous buckles and awards on Indy that year. Since 2002

she has competed every year in the PCHA Trail Classic and has placed in the Top Ten every year.

In 2004 Sue started really hitting the road hard to all the Paint Shows and placed in the top 5 in Trail and the Top 10 in Horsemanship at the Paint World. In 2008 Sue finally achieved her goal of winning the State Championship for Amateurs and in 2010 she finally won a Saddle in the Glen Gimple Horsemanship Finals after numerous years of trying. That's my wife who never gives up on anything. This year Sue is giving Indy a break from showing and is trying to get Indy bred. I guess she wants to start with a new baby. She is currently showing our daughters horse JB (Disturbin the Peace) while she is attending college. Sue has also raised two daughters to become accomplished riders and enjoyed nothing more than going to shows with them. If you every come by the Ranch I can guarantee that you won't find her in the house. She spends all her free time working with the horses at the ranch and enjoying all her other animals. Sue's whole focus in life is her animals whether it is her horses or the dogs. I always tell her if I had a choice I would come back as one of her horses. Sue has been a great wife and mother and I have enjoyed watching her and the girls grow up in the horse environment. The people we have met and the friends we have made from the horse community are the most cordial, down to earth people you could meet. It is a pleasure to be part of this community. I also want to say that Sue has accomplished a lot showing horses but to be nominated for an award like this is worth more than any award she has gotten because being recognized by your peers is the best award you can get.