

ride. But that's not true. It all has to do with how well the horse is handled and its training, regardless of the breed." The Arabian is extremely versatile, from jumping to racing to herding to performing. "Anything you can do with a horse, an Arabian can do at least as well," she insists.

The Conejo Valley Arabian Horse Breeders Association was founded in 1978. CVAHBA is a growing horse club that offers social and educational opportunities for Arabian horse lovers of all ages.

"We have a board that consists of a president, secretary, treasurer, everyone you'd normally have on a board. There are approximately 70 members in the Conejo Valley, who range from social members to breeders, and even people who don't have horses but want to be involved and want to know about horses." Members who join the association come from Conejo to Ojai, the Simi Valley to Paso Robles and even from the San Fernando Valley, Murray points out, "we are very diversified."

Owners of the breed are as committed to their animals as any family member. Names like Hot To Trot, Futurado, Firedancer, and Shah Azim communicate the affection they have for the purebred.

In fact, the Arabian is the only breed whose bloodline has been preserved for thousands of years and has contributed, in varying degrees, to the development of every other popular breed of horse ridden today, according to the International Arabian Horse Association's (IANA) newsletter.

The CVAHBA was recently nominated for Best Communications by the Arabian International Association for the local chapter's

advertising efforts in letting the community know what they're all about, as well as promoting the Arabian horse breed and showing its diversity.

Youth Program

Murray says the association sponsors a youth club with clinics that kids can come to whether or not they have a horse. "They can either watch or



Lee Murray fell in love with the Arabian's chiseled features and high intelligence.

participate" in the program as they wish, she says. "We put on seminars on grooming, maintenance and care, basic things that are important to know before you own a horse. Last year we put on a free clinic in which kids were shown how to properly bridle and unbridle their horse, take their horse for a walk, and other vital tips on caring for their horses. Some

of the kids who had been riding for quite awhile said they thought they knew everything until they attended one of our clinics. I've been riding since I was two and I still don't know everything there is to know about horses. It's a constant learning experience because every horse is different."

The association doesn't teach riding to its members, but they have ties to trainers in the community who they

held at a member's home, in our case at the treasurer's house."

Memberships cost from \$25 for a Social Single Membership, to a \$272 three-year International Arabian Horse Association (IAHA) Membership. Insurance is also available to protect riders who participate in club-sponsored events.

Why choose Arabian horses over other breeds? "I started out riding an Appaloosa as a child," Murray recalls. "Then there was a 20-year gap while I raised my children. Then one day I had a friend invite me to go riding, and I climbed on top of an Arabian and just fell in love. Luckily she was for sale, so I bought her instead of a computer," Murray says that the fine, chiseled appearance of the Arabian won her over. Now even her daughter, Lara, is a rider of the breed.

The prices of Arabians span a wide range, depending on what you have in mind. Typically they go for \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a regular riding horse, up to \$60,000 plus for a racehorse. It costs around \$100 a month to feed if you have your own stable. To board your horse it can cost an average of \$350 to \$500 a month per horse, which typically includes the feed.

During the year, two Arabian circuit shows are sponsored, in June and July. Anyone can come out if they want to know more about the Arabian horse, Murray says. "We have a lot of the kids volunteer and give out ribbons during competition. People can get up close and personal with the horses."

For more information on joining the Conejo Valley Arabian Horse Breeders Association, call Lee Murray at (805) 660-3400. Also check out the organization's Web site at: www.evahba.bizland.com.

can recommend for rider training.

In addition to the many seminars offered by the organization, the CVAHBA has a learning library with videotapes that can be checked out from the club. "We give members up-to-date information on seminars and clinics that are going on in the area and so on," she says. "We don't have an actual clubhouse per se, it's