

## 2012 Rider's Choice Winner

### Honey

Honey was five years old when we brought her. Diane had a horse named Lacy at the time and we decided that this was a sport that we could enjoy together. I immediately changed her name from Honey Bee to Honey. I had ridden several twenty-five and thirty-five mile races with her and decide to ride a fifty-mile race. That was about the last race I rode (we took second). I didn't ride much after that, but Honey kept on going. Diane continued riding her in endurance races for years. Even against the suggestions that this big meaty horse was no good to use in this sport. In fact, we almost sold her one time because she just didn't seem to have what it took to be a good endurance horse. A close friend talked us out of it (Katie Byrnes). As the years and races progressed, so did Honey's ability. She's not the speed demon that some horses are, but has been strong and steady. The fact that she is still going after 4000 endurance miles, over 7400 overall is a testimony to this. I myself have been impressed with these accomplishments. Twice she has ridden the length of the Shore-to-Shore with Diane, twice with Rachael (my now 16 year old), and Whitney (12 year old) completing 125 miles across, and several times she has ridden multiple days. Two years in a row she rode over 800 miles. She has even completed a 100-mile endurance ride.

Now, as if this weren't enough reason to nominate a horse into the Hall of Fame, she has taken on new duties, training a new rider. Rachael started riding her in the sport almost two years ago; Honey and she are going strong. Rachael and Whitney, with Honey's help finished first in Great Lakes, and received Rookie of the year and the Merry Legs award, various years. Now, with any other horse I don't think that Rachael and Whitney could have done this. Honey watches and takes care of them and likewise. Honey knows her job and does it well.

Now babysitting and training new riders is not the only thing Honey is naturally good at. Honey and I have ridden with the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department Mounted Division. So now, she not only takes care of my family, and me, she is also looking out for the well being of others. I cannot say enough about Honey. If you had asked me if a horse could be a part of a family, years back, I would have laughed. Now I can't image our family without her. She has taught us all a lot about living and loving. Honey is a truly sweet horse.

Additions for 2012.. Honey is still continuing to ride. She has won the UMECRA Senior Horse award three years. Whitney hopes to get her to 8000 lifetime miles this next summer! Honey there is a retirement soon -we promise!