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## GIVING NEW MEANING TO “LONG RIDES AND WET SADDLE PADS”

One equestrian combines his sense of adventure on horseback to inspire a cause.

**A**N EXPERIENCED horseman will tell you that there are no shortcuts to the partnership that develops between horse and rider ride after ride, mile after mile. In fact, Clinton is fond of saying that the only way to get a truly broke horse is by giving him three equal doses of long rides, wet saddle pads and concentrated training. For environmentalist and professor of environmental sciences and biology, Dr. Lucian Spataro, forging that bond was never more real than when he set off on a record-breaking trek across the United States by horseback in 1989.

Growing up in southern Ohio, Dr. Spataro developed an early appreciation for nature and horses. He spent his youth exploring the hollows, valleys and ponds near his home often on the back of his horses, Buck and Tim, and competed in local endurance races as a teenager. As he got older, his horseback trips often turned into overnight excursions where he would spend several days at a time on the trail. “There were animals everywhere: deer, hawk, quail, largemouth bass, frogs, fireflies and turtles. I had the unique opportunity to gain an appreciation for the natural world through these aimless wanderings and explorations,” he explains.

*With the help of three incredible Arabians and a dedicated team of supporters, Dr. Spataro traveled 2,963 miles across the country in 150 days to help raise awareness for the rainforests.*

With his appreciation for nature well in place by the time he headed off for college, Dr. Spataro hoped to become an environmental engineer and earned a B.S. from the University of Arizona. After graduation, he created a successful career in the corporate world, beginning in Mexico with Gates LearJet and IBM, and later joining the General Electric Corporation (UK) as Director for the Latin America Division. His sense of adventure and love for nature stayed firmly intact, and in 1982 he organized a team of scuba divers who set a Guinness World Record for riding a tricycle 64 miles underwater.

Four years later, Dr. Spataro was considering the idea of setting yet another record, this one on horseback. At the same time, his concern was growing for the increasing depletion of the rainforest. Although rainforests cover less than two percent of the Earth's total surface area, they are home to over 50 percent of its plants and animals, many of which are used to produce medicines, food and industrial products. Rainforests also play a key role in climate change, helping to regulate the Earth's temperatures and weather pattern. At that time, the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) estimated that half of the world's tropical rainforests had been destroyed at a rate of 50 million acres a year.

It was while speaking with Bazy Tankersley, owner of the renowned Al-Marah Arabians, at a business function that Dr. Spataro's next adventure began to take shape. He decided to combine his quest to set the record for the fastest horseback ride across America with a campaign to raise awareness and funds for the preservation of the world's tropical rainforests.

With the support of RAN and Al-Marah Arabians, who donated three horses to complete the ride, Dr. Spataro assembled a team of individuals to help him reach his goal. On May 5th 1989, amid early morning rush hour traffic, Dr. Spataro, astride AM Sweet William, left Huntington Beach, California headed for Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, 2,963 miles away.

Crossing through 14 states that took him alongside busy interstates, backcountry roads

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*The ride from coast to coast demanded Dr. Spataro and the Arabians cover all sorts of terrain from picking their way through wooded areas and streams to riding alongside busy highways.*

The ride across America was made possible by a team of talented individuals including (from left to right): Joyce Braden, March Along, Brad Braden, Bea Shepard, Sea Ruler, Dr. Spataro and Bob Shepard, pictured at the finish of the ride on Oct. 15, 1989.



and across the lawn of the White House, Dr. Spataro cut the standing world record in half for traveling across the U.S. in the shortest time on a horse. Along the coast to coast trek, he and his team educated thousands and drew attention to the destruction of the world's rainforests by holding press conferences and attending fundraising events. By the time he reached Chesapeake Bay in October, Dr. Spataro had spent 1,500 hours in the saddle, averaging 19.75 miles a day, and raised over \$100,000 for RAN that would go to their conservation efforts in central and south America.

## HORSE SENSE

While training for and during the ride itself, Dr. Spataro spent just under 2,400 hours in the saddle, logging 4,763 miles in nine months, and became more connected to horses than ever before. Throughout the ride, he used three Al-Marah Arabian geldings—AM Sweet William, AM Sea Ruler and AM March Along. Sweet William was the lead-off horse, and he and Dr. Spataro earned their record for the fastest ride by a single rider and horse by covering 1,553 miles in 63 days. Starting in Los Angeles and finishing in Oklahoma, the 8-year-old gelding steadfastly carried

## THE LONG RIDE

*The Long Ride* is a vivid, sweeping and passionate story about a modern day adventure that puts you firmly in the saddle, on the back of a beautiful Arabian horse, and sets you upon a record-setting ride through small towns and big cities across America. It is the story of a team with a very specific purpose—a team of people and their Arabian horses on a coast-to-coast journey to set a record and draw attention to the destruction of the world's rainforests. From the heat of the desert, through the traffic and smog of the cities, pouring rain in the Midwest, to autumn leaves in the East, the book recounts the spectacular journey with hundreds of photos, vivid storytelling and dramatic detail. It's a historic feat that makes for a fascinating and inspiring read.

To learn more about Dr. Spataro and *The Long Ride*, visit the website [www.thelongride.com](http://www.thelongride.com), where you can read excerpts from the book and view video clips from the 1989 ride. To purchase the book, go to [www.ipgbook.com/the-long-ride-products-9780983501909.php](http://www.ipgbook.com/the-long-ride-products-9780983501909.php).

Dr. Spataro nearly half of the journey across America. When Sweet William was retired in Oklahoma, Dr. Spataro alternated riding Sea Ruler and March Along until he reached the East Coast.

While Sweet William, Sea Ruler and March Along all returned to Al-Marah Arabians after the ride finished, Dr. Spataro went on to earn an M.S. and Ph.D. in Environmental Studies from Ohio University and continued making global and local contributions to the environmental world through his positions as an engineer, manager and educator.

Although horses remained an important aspect in his life, it wasn't until 2008 that he began endurance riding again. His gelding, Masquerade, whom he purchased from Al-Marah Arabians, is now 10 and bears a striking resemblance to the three geldings he rode some twenty years ago.

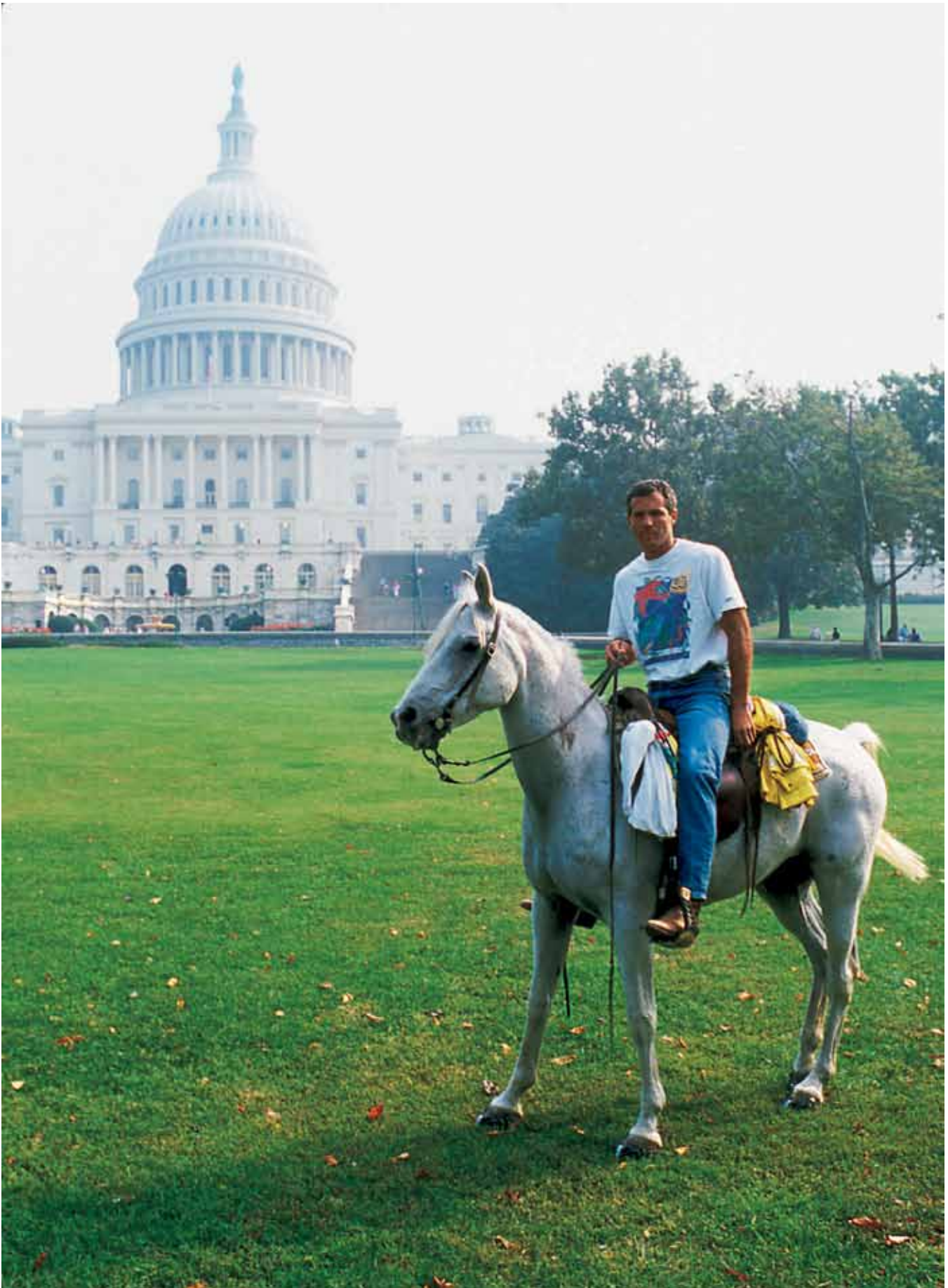
A dedicated horseman, Dr. Spataro actively seeks knowledge to become a more accomplished rider, and it was at the Scottsdale Walkabout Tour last December that he got his first taste of Clinton and his horsemanship method. As the two-day event

opened with Clinton detailing the philosophy behind the Method, Dr. Spataro immediately saw a connection between what Clinton was demonstrating in the arena and his years of study. "I was attracted to Clinton's methodology as his philosophy is in line with how nature really works," Dr. Spataro comments. "He understands how horses perceive, interact and react to stimuli from an evolutionary standpoint, and that they are driven first and foremost by their role in the natural system."

What intrigued Dr. Spataro most as he continued to watch Clinton work with that weekend's demo horses was Clinton's simplistic explanation of how horses communicate and perceive the world around them. "As one who has studied animals and been around nature for a long time, I understand the predator/prey premise and the basis of Clinton's approach makes sense from a scientific standpoint, and for that reason, I was intrigued as no one had explained it this way before," Dr. Spataro says. "When I went to the show it all fell into place in terms of the side of the brain we need to focus on when working with the horses or exposing them to stimulation."



*Dr. Spataro, pictured with Sea Ruler, finished the record-setting ride he started on May 19, 1989 in California on October 15, 1989 in Chesapeake Bay.*



*Dr. Spataro and the gelding, March Along, pose in Washington, D.C.*



Since the Scottsdale tour, Dr. Spataro has continued to study and he has been incorporating the Method into his interactions with Masquerade. He trains and competes the gelding in endurance events, often riding in McDowell Mountain Regional Park near his Scottsdale home.

### COMING FULL CIRCLE

Twenty plus years after completing his record-breaking ride, Dr. Spataro is still focused on raising awareness for protecting the environment. Last year, he published *The Long Ride*, a personal account of his journey across America, the cause that pushed him to finish, the special horses that carried him and the many people who were an integral part to the overall success.

“The rainforest is a very important issue: it has long-range global implications and is, I firmly believe, one of the top three most pressing environmental problems facing us today. But what is most important is how people relate to the environmental crisis in general and how effective we are at convincing people of its importance,” Dr. Spataro says. “I continue to believe, as I did when I began the ride, that the best way to convince someone you are sincere and that you care is through your example. We cared enough about this issue to take on this challenge, and ultimately, to finish. My hope is that *The Long Ride* will inform and motivate others to ‘throw on a saddle’ and join this ride.”

*Twenty years after the ride, Dr. Spataro has returned to endurance riding and competing with his gelding, Masquerade*