

Kendal Patrol, now known as Zuckie, was bred at Kendal Hills Stud Farm, in Campbellcroft, Ontario and trained by the renowned trainer, John Kopas. His birth date is February 22, 1994.

By all accounts, Zuckie was bred to be a successful racehorse. His sire, Topnotcher, was so highly regarded that he was exported to New South Wales, Australia, (and then to Tasmania) where he became a foundation sire of the Australian Standardbred industry. Topnotcher was bred on the world renowned Abercrombie/Most Happy Fella cross. He has 550 live foals in Australia and he sired 142 individual winners there who have won more than \$4 million dollars. His sire, the immortal Abercrombie, whose progeny won over a billion dollars in stake money, is famous as the sire of Artsplace, Life Sign and Albert Albert, all outstanding sires. Topnotcher was Abercrombie's ninth leading stakes winner who earned \$1,340,850. He was out of the Most Happy Fella mare, She's The Most.

Zuckie's dam was Secret Patrol, a very well bred American mare from the Albatross/Bret Hanover line, who made \$80,173, really good money for her era. Secret Patrol produced some very nice foals, including Sugar Patrol, a \$119,531 winner, and Watch Patrol at almost \$200,000. She was known for throwing exceptionally beautiful looking offspring.

Just why Zuckie never raced is unknown. Although he sustained an injury to the curb area of the hock during training, which was chiroed, this is a common injury in standardbred racing and should not have prevented him from continuing. More likely attitude, and lack of speed, were the reasons for him never making it to the track.

Ownership of Kendal Patrol was transferred to the Ontario Standardbred Adoption Society in January, 1998. He was then retrained as a riding horse, however, little is known about Zuckie's original adopter and who was responsible for his initial retraining. Then, in 2005, he was adopted by Donna Stokell, of Pembroke, Ontario. Zuckie was intended to be Donna's riding horse and he enjoyed a relaxed, happy life at the farm in Pembroke, Ontario owned by Donna and her husband, Tom Kennedy. Donna and Tom run a boarding barn and also have a herd of draft horses, which are the legacy of Tom's long family association with breeding and showing Belgians. Unfortunately, the demands of running a barn and maintaining an off farm job kept Donna from making much use of Zuckie. Tom rode him western occasionally and boarders and friends rode him English, but Donna worried that Zuckie wasn't being used to his full potential.

She communicated this to Dianne Denby, who was OSAS Program Coordinator at the time, and Dianne suggested me as a candidate to take over Zuckie's adoption. I was already a volunteer with the program, performing barn inspections for potential adopters, and guardian duties. Dianne told me that if she could personally choose any horse in the program, it would be Zuckie. It was a great recommendation,

though the timing was less than ideal, as I was going through considerable personal turmoil at the time. This was in the summer of 2008, and it was not until March, 2009 that Zuckie and I finally met. There was still snow on the ground, so we couldn't do all that much when I rode him, and I was initially concerned that I was too big for him. No one else shared my concern and, in early July, we went back to Pembroke and I rode Zuckie again. We used the sand ring and then rode down the trail for a bit. He was great – cantered on both leads in the sand ring and was a perfect gentleman on the trail. I said, yes. Donna and Tom said, when?

On August 1st, 2009, Donna and Tom trailered Zuckie down to Hollow Tree Farms, in Yarker, where I had arranged board for him. I couldn't believe it when he got off the trailer. He was so beautiful. Neither Donna nor Tom knew that the next day was my birthday. What a gift!

So, in the next few months Zuckie and I set about getting to know each other. We did some ring work and lots of trail riding. I was astonished at how responsive he is. The slightest indication from me of a change of direction brought an instant response. His driving training also pays off in spades with his knowledge of voice commands. For instance, I once rode him down a trail, which ended at a road. Where the trail met the road, it was almost hidden by giant cedars and I was concerned that we wouldn't be able to see if there were any cars coming until the last minute. I was also worried that drivers would not be able to see us until it was too late. Since I talk to him all the time, I voiced my concern – “I think we had better turn around and go back, Zuckie”. Without hesitation, he made a tight 180° turn and headed back the way we had come. It's a rare day that he doesn't surprise me and make me laugh. He trail rides equally well in company or alone.

Am I painting a picture of a perfect horse? Is it too good to be true? To clarify, he does have a strong personality. He's very opinionated, and he's notoriously impatient. Grooming that goes on too long, food that takes too long to get to his stall – both are cause for enthusiastic pawing. He also spooks – a lot. In fact, I've been known to tell him they would have called him Spooky if it were not bad marketing, and that Zuckie was a necessary compromise. He's paranoid about bugs. This past summer was a particularly bad one for flies and mosquitoes in our part of Ontario and, as soon as spring came, he developed a radical head toss that made him all but unrideable, even in a fly mask and sprayed all over.

Happily, in July, we moved to a different barn, Benders Four Seasons, in Centreville, where there is a huge, breezy sand ring and an indoor arena. The indoor has proved invaluable for riding on days when the bugs are especially bad, and will be great for avoiding icy conditions this winter. It can be accessed directly from the barn, which is another huge advantage. The owners of the barn, Cindy and Dan Bender, are extremely knowledgeable and caring horse people and seven of the horses on the property are their own quarter horses. As in so many boarding barns, there are horses that are never ridden. There is only one other boarder who rides regularly and her schedule and mine rarely coincide, so Zuckie and I are most often alone.

However, this other boarder is an experienced show jumper, who brought her jumps to the barn along with her horse. I have permission to use her jumps any time, which very exciting, as Zuckie loves to jump. In addition to the trails on the farm, which extend around the hay fields as far as the next road, I have been granted permission to ride on trails which range over the 180 acres belonging to a neighbour. Their land is unusually hilly for Southern Ontario and very scenic. Zuckie loves it there. He treats the varied terrain and trail conditions as a kind of horsey adventure playground. There are open fields, a sugar bush, a cedar and pine plantation, and even some wetlands with open water. Both trail areas provide good conditioning.

I ride Zuckie almost every day and all those hills, along with the excellent hay and feed he receives at the Benders, have produced a solid horse with muscles resembling those of a quarter horse, a gleaming coat, and lots of energy. Most importantly, he seems to be very happy. The other day, we did a little jumping in the indoor arena. His stall was still being cleaned when we were finished, so I took him back into the arena with me while I put away the jumps. He was loose, in just a halter, and he followed me everywhere. I swear if he could have helped lift the poles, he would have. At one point, the standards were put away but the poles were still lying on the ground. I ran and jumped over them and he followed and did the same. He got the biggest hug for that! After these first 16 months together, he comes to the gate as soon as he sees my car come down the drive, and he watches me constantly until I drive away again. As a result of this endearing personality, in addition to being a really good, responsive ride, Zuckie has an entire fan club. It seems that just about everyone who has ridden him, or even just handled him, loves him and wants to remain a part of his life. He has so many friends, and thanks in part to him, so do I.

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