

Rhonda Snider (above, opposite page), is helped into her gear by Bill Schauuff, the jumpmaster. The parachute will carry her safely to the ground after she jumps 3,000 feet out of an airplane. (Below, opposite page) Snider and Sarah Oates, receive last-minute instructions before boarding the plane.

Dena Brown and Sweet, the tall dark one, (above, this page) are out for a bare-back jaunt around the stables. Brown, never outgrew asking for a pony at Christmas every year. Now she has bought her first horse. They are not only horse and rider but (below, this page) the best of friends as well.



## Horsin' around

By DENA L. BROWN

*Staff Writer*

When I was three, I caught the fever. Horse fever.

By the time I was five, I was drawing 10 to 12 horses a day. And we're not talking little ponies ... no sir, we're talking horses.

My habit began to be an obsession. I read every "Billy and Blaze" book ever written. Finally, I wrote off Blaze and progressed to Walter Farley's "Black Stallion" series. "The Black Stallion," "The Black Stallion Returns," "The Black Stallion and the Girl," "The Black Stallion Meets Godzilla" — all were a part of my life.

At seven, I made a bet with a boy that I could draw horses better than he could. I won, and he turned over his favorite Palomino mare to me. The horse was only plastic, but I knew one day

I would own a real horse.

My model horse collection grew. At 60 horses, I felt my parents would realize that my love for horses was real. I kept trying to make deals with them. You know, "Instead of a car when I'm 16, can I have a horse?" The only problem was, my dad had no intention of getting me a car either.

Finally, I started high school. I don't know if I just gave up on horses or if I thought I'd outgrown them, but horses were no longer the focal point of my life. Sure, every now and then I'd try to find a place to ride, but the closest stables were 30 miles away and my mom didn't want to drive me.

And then came college — and men.

But somewhere in the back of

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