

# people

## A Man, a Woman, and Six-hundred Horses Jenny Whitman

I first met Karin Wagner, the CEO and founder of Neigh Savers Foundation, in 2011 when I offered to foster horses at Bear Creek Stables. Karin sent me a bay mare named Toro's Lady. When our vet determined that she had an injury that would require up to a year to heal, I learned that Karin goes the extra mile for every one of the horses in her program. She didn't hesitate to provide all the financial and emotional support needed to rehabilitate and acclimate Lady to her new life.

Since Karin started Neigh Savers in 2007, over 600 horses have been retrained and found new homes through her program. Many were rehomed without rehabilitation or retraining. From Bear Creek Stables alone, 24 Neigh Saver horses have been successfully placed in loving homes. Karin has taught the Neigh Savers volunteers the true meaning of making a difference, one horse at a time.

Who is this amazing woman who works with the harsh reality of the racing industry?

Here is her story. Karin was born in Germany in 1953. Her parents immigrated to the United States in 1956. She grew up knowing that her family had suffered greatly in Germany during World War II but they never discussed this time. They did talk about how blessed and privileged they felt to be able to live in a free and safe society.

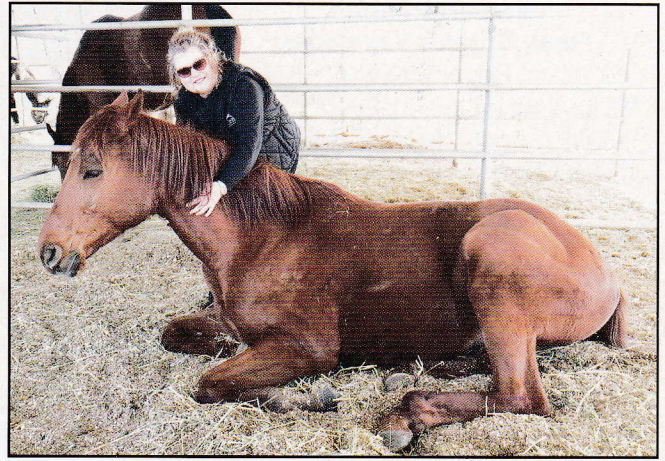
Karin knew that her German grandfather had served in World War I and died in World War II. His portrait was hung in her family's hallway. Karin had worried that perhaps he had been part of the Nazi party, so his portrait made her uncomfortable.

It wasn't until shortly before her mother's death in 2013, when she was going through

her mother's belongings, that she learned the truth.

She discovered an untouched and forgotten journal that her grandfather, Hans Schiller, had written of his experiences in World War I. He had kept a meticulous diary from 1914 to 1920. Karin spent the next two years translating the entire journal of 184 handwritten pages into English.\*

Hans Schiller had been a decorated captain in the German Calvary in World War I. To Karin's surprise, his greatest passion had been cavalry horses. She learned that her grandfather had been a man of principle, integrity, and kindness. She felt personally humbled by his story. In a strange way, she felt as though he had written the journal for her. It gave her a



Hans Schiller during World War I

feeling of connection and comfort to grow close to him.

Karin learned that her grandfather, along with many other World War I veterans, had been forced to sign an oath of allegiance to the Nazi party. Privately, Hans Schiller had spoken out against Hitler and referred to him as "The Criminal." During World War II, he took his own life rather than support the Nazi regime. Karin realized how conflicted and tortured he felt when faced with the reality of Nazi Germany.

Learning her grandfather's story has helped Karin find peace. His legacy gives her the courage to continue expanding the Neigh Savers model to include equine-empowerment clinics. Karin believes horses have an amazing ability to heal and teach us. She is committed to reaching out to the community to help high-school students, veterans, and other at-risk groups "one person at a time."

*\*Hans Schiller's journal is now in the hands of Dr. Gregory Loving, who heads the Sociology Department at the University of Cincinnati, and his colleague, Dr. Frederick Krone, who is an expert on World War I. The journal has been selected for print by UK Press after the professors' historical notes concerning the events and battles Hans Schiller described are added.*



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