

# California Horsetrader

VOICE OF CAL

Vol. 10 No. 14

May 4, 1989

Two Sections

P.O. BOX 1

## He's on a ride with a message

With help of many,  
Lucian Spataro set  
to ride across U.S.

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Horsetrader Staff

**A**llen Coward has never thought of himself as a jungle guide, but he is one. Later this month, he will lead Lucian Spataro on horseback through the most treacherous stretch of Spataro's 3,000-mile ride to raise funds for rain forest preservation.

Spataro will embark on his 4- to 5-month journey May 18, riding one of two Arabian geldings donated by a prominent Arabian breeder who shares his chief environmental concern — the rapid destruction of the world's irreplaceable rain forests. The jungle that Coward will lead Spataro through is less tropical but no less hazardous — the asphalt and concrete maze of Southern California.

"I've been planning my route for nine months," says Spataro, who had to obtain 26 permits for his transcontinental fundraiser from Huntington Beach to New York. "It was interesting to find out that California — just getting out of Los Angeles — was more difficult than getting across the country."

From his home and office in Tucson, Ariz., Spataro has been thinking about or planning this event for three years. The project accelerated when he became aligned with the Rain Forest Action Network (RAN) in San Francisco and the Environmental Policy Institute (EPI) in Washington, D.C. — the organizations that will funnel proceeds of his "Ride Across America" to projects battling the plight of the world's rain forests.

First, though, is the plight of traversing the freeways of Orange and Riverside counties. Assistance is coming from the Greater Lake Mathews Rural Trails Association, which hopes to deliver Spataro safely from his ocean take-off point to a fund-raising dinner two nights later at the Reinhold Arabian Ranch near Riverside. Coward, a veteran of area trails and endurance races, volunteered



Susan Victoria photo

Lucian Spataro and Sea Ruler in workout

at the March GLMRTA meeting to guide Spataro from Prado Dam, his first night's destination, to the dinner party.

"Lucian says his horse is trained for parades and riot control — things like that — so he's not opposed to going down streets," says Coward. "I'm going to do my best, though, to find a route

that will keep him pretty much on trails and away from the metropolitan area."

Coward says Spataro will follow the Santa Ana riverbed from Huntington Beach to Prado Dam to camp. The second day, he'll enter Riverside County, cross the Riverside Freeway, and head to Lake Mathews via Cajalco Road. Spataro will spend the third night near Hemet before continuing to State Highway 62, then on to Twentynine Palms and across the desert to Arizona.

The biggest challenge, Coward says, will be crossing the Riverside Freeway near the border of Riverside and Orange counties. "It's kind of a shakey area, but I think I can take him underneath the freeway and find a trail that skirts Corona and that whole city," says Coward, who took his half-Arabian over the course last weekend. "I've ridden a lot of the trail from Interstate 15 to Lake Mathews, and that's very nice. But getting him through Corona is going to be a challenge."

When Spataro arrives at Reinhold, he'll receive a hearty welcome. GLMRTA President Sandy Richards is planning a fund-raising barbecue with entertainment, a chance for Spataro to explain his cause, and a raffle that includes some ambitious prizes — including a trip for two to Hawaii and an 11-year-old Arabian gelding, Prince Dijon.

"They've been instrumental in getting us from Huntington Beach to the Arizona border," says Spataro, who will be accompanied by a three-man support crew. "A problem when I'm in Tucson is determining what the best local routes would be."

Coward, Richards, Lillian Reinhold, trip donor Karren Davidson, and gelding donor Shirli Souther are four of many people nationwide who are embracing Spataro's endeavor. Among the Ride Across America board members are Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.), actor Ted Danson and Bazy Tankersley, owner of the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Cubs. Tankersley, who also owns Al-Marah Arabians, has donated two Arabian geldings

See TRAIL RIDE, Page 109

## Growth is the word at '89 Horse Expo