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## Local rides to All-Around win

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**Francine Barnes wins All-Around title on Zippos Ace of Spades.** Photo courtesy: The American Quarter Horse Journal.



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**Barnes also took home the World Title in western riding.** Photo courtesy: The American Quarter Horse Journal.

Winning may be in the Barnes family genes or it could be the luck and skill of an Ace.

Francine Barnes, 56, won the 2008 All-Around title at the Bayer Select World Championships in August, two years after her daughter Nicole won the 2006 Sooner Trailer All-Around Amateur title. Both women won riding their 11-year-old quarter horse Zippos Ace of Spades, or just Ace for short.

The Glenview resident and owner of the [Carriage Hill Kennels](#) said riding horses is her passion and showing horses a hobby, one that led to an unexpected all-around win.

"I've always had a love for horses, a love for nature. I got started riding horses with my dad," Barnes said. "He bought a farm and my dream came true when he started getting these horses."

Her daughter Nicole, 22, started riding and showing when she was 7, but Barnes said she didn't start showing herself until 2001.

For the past three years, Barnes has competed at the Bayer Select World Championships, which is for riders 50 and over.

"I was so excited when I turned 50," she said. "I was like 'Yes! I can show in the 50 and over class! I don't have to show against 20-year-olds!'"

This year, Barnes, a Western style rider, beat out 64 other competitors who qualified for the all-around at the championship held in Amarillo, Texas during

the last week of August. The riders came from both English and Western style riding as well as those showing in the halter classes.

Barnes competed in four different classes – western riding, showmanship, trail and horsemanship which all involve riding or leading a horse in different patterns around cones in the arena.

She made it to the finals in showmanship and trail and won her second World Title in western riding. Horsemanship was the only class in which Barnes didn't qualify for the finals.

"Traditionally you usually have to make it to the finals and place in all the classes that you're showing," Barnes said. "That's why I just didn't ever think I would win that award, but it was pretty amazing."

Horse trainer Brad Kearns said he and Barnes didn't focus on winning the competition, but wanted to do their best in the four classes.

Kearns has been training with the Barnes family for 15 years, and he remembers how difficult Barnes' first showing experience was, but said she got over her nerves and began winning. This year is the perfect example.

"I thought that we had a chance, but I really thought that there were so many other competitors that also had good chances," Kearns said. "But the stars lined up and fell into place."

Nicole said words can't explain how she feels about her mother's win.

"I'm really, really proud of her," she said. "She really does try and she's been there for my entire horse show career. I just hope that I can be as helpful to her as she has been to me."

The mother-daughter pair said that Ace is a special part of their lives and he's not just a horse they ride in shows.

"There's a bond that you get. It's like a bond you have with a dog. Ace is a pet," Barnes said. "I was just talking about this with my daughter. I said 'he is just like a dog' and my daughter said 'He is. He's a 1,400 lb. dog!'"

In the coming year, Barnes said she doesn't plan to do much showing because she has big plans for the Carriage Hill Kennels, which include the construction of a new building to house an indoor swimming pool and a fitness center for dogs.

But she isn't giving up riding.

"Horses are a lifestyle. It's addicting," Barnes said. "The only goal I have now with Ace, I would love to win showmanship at the Bayer Select World Championship."

To learn more about the American Quarter Horse World Championships visit [aqha.com](http://aqha.com).

*Photos: The American Quarter Horse Journal*