

What better proof that actions have consequences? Nothing personal was intended, Carla, and I'm sorry my columns upset you. Thank you for taking the time to write.

You brought up two specific points from previous columns, but drastically misinterpreted both of them. I stand behind the content and phrasing of my columns 100 percent, so I'd like to set the record straight on those first.

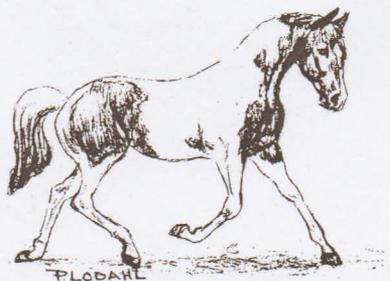
When you said that I "suggested that if a customized horse doesn't arrive at your doorstep on time, don't bother crediting the artist," you're referring to *Artists take Time, But a Few Will Take You* (THHN August-September 1991, pages 8-9)...but I'm buffaloeed as to how you got that impression! In that column, I made sure to mention that delays in the completion of a model may occur, and the obvious reason why: "Something may well come up to push back the agreed-upon date of completion—after all, artists lead real lives too—but just in case the seller reneges on the agreement and tries to make the buyer wait for far longer than necessary, the buyer has proof of the transaction." Of course delays are apt to happen! Remaking is not most artists' sole means of support, and I can certainly appreciate that real life takes priority. I live with an artist, Corky Visminas, who has been swamped with custom orders, and must shoehorn them in between her full-time job and freelance illustration commitments. Unlike some artists, though, she keeps her customers informed as to how their orders are progressing, and has never received a single complaint.

The column goes on to warn that "every so often, an unscrupulous individual surfaces in the hobby, advertises widely, does nice work and gains a good-sized following, but then disappears—taking hundreds, sometimes thousands, of hobbyists' dollars, and leaving a trail of angry customers and lawsuits in their wake... you may be in the process of dealing with a remaker, tack maker, or photographer who really seems as though they're on their way to *becoming* a person like this." This is a person who has far overstepped the bounds, to the point that you're afraid you'll never see either your model or your money again. If that's the case, "there are a few things you can do to make yourself feel better, and protect other people from being ripped off by these individuals too"...and one of those things I mentioned was to not credit the remaker (or tack maker or photographer) on the back of the photo back if you show other examples of their work.

"What kind of asinine advice is that?" you ask. The same paragraph in that column explained my reasoning: "By listing credits on a photo back you're doling out free advertising where it counts most." By not promoting the artist's name, you're protecting other hobbyists from an artist who seems on his or her way to becoming a crook.

"If someone asked you in person who did it, are you going to lie to them because it wasn't on time?" you ask. Of course not—in fact, most models are going to arrive a bit later than projected, because real-life detours rarely enter the equation when an artist estimates completion time. I understand and expect that, so I'm doubly delighted when a model *does* arrive on time. But if getting the model from the artist was like trimming tarantula toenails, I make sure to mention that if someone asks about their work. I'm just as quick to praise good artists, too.

The second point you mentioned from a previous column is from last issue's "Death" of a Showhorse—A Rhyme for the Times (THHN October-November 1991, page 40. "Are you suggesting that an artist cannot show a picture of her work to anyone for fear of offending the person who bought the horse?" you ask. Again, I just don't know where you came up with that! Not only did I never say that, but also, I make it a regular practice to send a photo of a new model to its remaker if the horse didn't come with photos.



This way, the artist has a photo for his or her portfolio, to use in advertising, to show to interested customers, friends, or neighbors, or to even draw a moustache on if they want. But that doesn't grant them permission to show the property that I've purchased, no matter what restrictions are placed on the show. This has been an unwritten rule for the last 20 years, ever since the hobby's birth.

Yet your group seems confident that just because it has put into writing that members can break this unwritten rule that makes it all right. In your letter, you stressed that "of course these artists are not showing these models outside of designated show. It is an unwritten rule to follow throughout the hobby and everyone seems to understand this." But you have *already* broken one unwritten rule—the rule that you do not show another person's model, another person's property, without their permission. What will stop anyone from writing their own set of rules granting themselves permission to break that unwritten rule you cited, too?

What could be next—the Tack Makers' All-Performance Party, where tack makers can campaign their reference photos of other peoples' models wearing their creations? How about the Photographers' Fraternity, where pro photographers can not only show extra prints of photos they took for other peoples' models, but also make some pocket change by selling anyone new prints from the negatives they may have kept? Another popular club would be the Live Showers' Photo-Show League, where you can campaign all the pictures that you've snapped of other peoples' horses at live shows!

Any of those would take the fun out of the hobby pretty pronto. What about your club? Of *course* it's fun for its 19 members. But that fun comes at the expense of a vastly larger number of your fellow hobbyists!

Certainly artists have rights. Customers do, too. Respecting one another's rights is the basis of good customer relations. If the customer treats you ethically, doesn't give you a hassle about paying, and makes sure to credit your work, then you will probably want to continue to deal with that customer. And if an artist treats a customer ethically, delivers a model created to the best of their ability and with a minimum of delays, and does not crank out close cousins of that horse afterwards, the customer will probably want to continue to deal with that artist.

But by not asking customers' permission to show the models they sold them, artists are throwing good customer relations out the window. Here's a theoretical example of the repercussions these artists' actions may have. Let's say that each of the club's 19 members has had 25 customers buy one horse each from them at an average price of, say, \$75. That means each club member has parted with 25 horses to 25 customers in return for \$1,875. Altogether, those 19 club members have sold 475 horses to 475 people and made \$35,625! And if those artists feel entitled to take back partial show rights of their customers' property without permission, that sends a message loud and clear to customers: their business means nothing once the money they paid has been spent, and they are being expected to put up with such abuse. If they don't, then the artist may tell them, as you have done, that "the artist can find another buyer, but you will be stuck showing in OF Only shows."

Your letter is the first I have heard that you are showing Speedy Lucy Luna Black Train, and Romeona, and it's a sickening feeling. Corky and I are shocked and hurt by your actions and the way in which you delivered the news. (Speedy Lucy Luna's owner of the last two years will be unhappy, too.) We feel helpless and victimized; I wonder how many of your other customers—and customers of other club members—will find out in this way? Or do most members simply keep quiet and hope their customers will never find out?

I can sympathize with the bond you feel with your creations, especially with all the obvious work, skill, and inspiration that goes into them. I can especially sympathize with artists like Corky, who are so busy creating models for others that they have no time to do one for themselves—they can only hope that their customers will campaign their creations widely and give them proper credit. But then again, it is each artist's choice to accept a custom order or to sell a model, and their responsibility to honor that commitment after payment has been long pent. Corky keeps a few reference photos of each model she does, but does not help herself to partial show rights, no matter how limited; those belong to the owners of her

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