



April 2007

Eventing Season Kicks-off at Tamarack

85 starters gear up at one-day schooling horse trials

By Sue Smithson

The sport of eventing evolved from a military test for a cavalry mount, so it was fitting that military members and family rose to top rankings in the season's opener in Southern Pines March 4 at Tamarack Hill Farm.

Camp Lejeune based Marines Abigail Grant and Calleen Kinney both earned top ribbons in their beginner novice eventing debut, riding for owners who are deployed overseas. Kinney and Pilikua Koa, owned by marine helicopter pilots Russell and Erin Smith, won the dressage by a scant half point over Rebel's Last Yell and Kathy Gurley in her first outing since a hip replacement. With an unlucky stadium rail, Kinney finished second behind Prime Time and Carey Knouff of New Hill. Grant jumped clean to claim fourth with Margaret Thomas' Chancellor. "These girls are gutsy

and totally fearless" commented Tamarack trainer Denny Emerson. "(Members of the Armed Services) are fit and disciplined, and exactly the kind of people who are attracted to this sport."

U.S. Army Special Forces Colonel Manny Diemer was home from Iraq for a few weeks, and watched his son Andrew capture the junior division with The Big Easy. Diemer, 16, earned a six point margin in dressage and never looked back. The Big Easy was too big for polocrosse, too green to hunt, and had been on the back burner until Andrew tacked him up this season as his second string eventer. "This horse needed a job," said Diemer's mother Dana. "I think he



Andrew Diemer and The Big Easy won the junior beginner novice division.
Photo by Sue Smithson

found one."

Beginner novice was the day's largest and most unpredictable division. In division
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NCDCTA Musical Freestyle Clinic

By Jennifer Mitchell

On the first Saturday of March, three very happy and inspired riders headed home with newly choreographed musical freestyles. They had just attended the NCDCTA Musical Freestyle Clinic with Mary Harrison. While the numbers were small...the satisfaction was great. Even the auditors walked away with more than what they expected to receive from this clinic.

Mary Harrison, a freestyle specialist from New Jersey, made for a delightful clinician. It is clear that she is passionate about helping riders discover the joy of dancing with their horses. The one day clinic, held at Lynn Leath's beautiful North Star Training Center in Chapel Hill, consisted of two sessions. The morning session provided participants and auditors with a brief and interesting lecture about the history of quadrille riding and how it evolved

into today's musical freestyle. Mary spoke about the rhythm of each gait and how to determine the beats per minute so that music could be chosen. She emphasized the importance of matching the appropriate music to the horse which should enhance the horse's gaits. She explained the rider's need to really like the music because he or she will be listening to it a lot. Mary even addressed how a musical freestyle was to be practiced and perfected before debuting it. Following this, each participant provided a video tape of her horse showing the walk, trot and canter. With the help of her little "beat doctor" tool, Mary established the beats per minute of each gait. Once this was known, the appropriate music would be selected.

Before coming to North Carolina for our clinic, Mary put together many freestyle selections that provided various tempos as

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At the Palm Beach Dressage Derby CDI*** in Florida March 1-4, Cape Town and Holly Shook of Charlotte won the FEI Young Rider Musical Freestyle class with a 70.5 after top placings in both the YR team test and YR Prix St. Georges.

And Magie Noir, owned and shown by Bonnie Efid of Waxhaw, won both the FEI Junior team and individual tests (67.2%, 69%). Both riders are coached by Diane Ritz of Waxhaw.

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\$50 page \$40 half

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Attention Dressage Competitors

The prize list for the 2007 CDI-W/Y/J Raleigh and Capital Dressage Classic, to be held on June 1-3, is posted on the CDI website

(www.cdi-raleigh.com). Contact Janine Malone (919-269-7307 or jemrph@aol.com) to receive a copy in the mail.

Attention All Trainers

Welcome to the Trainers' Directory. This is a free service for members to help fellow members find new trainers.

Trainers, please email the following info to me at NCDCTAnews@mac.com:

Name, Tel # and/or email address:
Facility/Location & Discipline



Lynn Leath
North Star Training Center
Chapel Hill, NC
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Claudia Novick
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Dressage

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eventing, dressage, huntseat, jumping

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Victory Hill Farm
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disciplines: mason, eventing, equitation (H/J and dressage seat), pony school.

Amanda Miller
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Dream Catcher Equestrian, Matthews, NC
Eventing and Dressage

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Telephone: 828-777-9116
Email: kelly@kellysigler.com
Biltmore Estate Equestrian Center
One Biltmore Estate Drive, Asheville
Discipline: Parelli Natural Horsemanship Instructor. Evented through Preliminary Level, and coached through Training Level

Julia Dearborn
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tempe-fiorefarm@earthlink.net Located at Fiore Farms in Summerfield (near Greensboro) Focusing on dressage and combined training.

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BayMare Meadows Farm, Oak Ridge NC
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Dressage training

Musical Freestyle cont'd from page 1

well as genres of music. Thanks to her obvious knack for picking great tunes and knowing the diverse musical tastes of riders, participants were able to choose from a nice assortment of freestyle music. There was Latin music, Broadway tunes, swing, classical, western, rock and roll, and more. Katie Sanders, a Young Rider who recently won the 2006 BLM JR/YR First Level Championship, provided the gallery of participants and auditors with some real fun. It was obvious that the 19 year old was just a little too hip to appreciate how well the Broadway tunes matched the footfalls of her Westphalian gelding. Next, Mary popped in the CD with the perfectly timed western music, which the crowd LOVED. However, Katie's very subtle sideways sneer at her mother made it clear that riding to the sound of cowboy music just wasn't her thing. Then, we all watched her tape again...this time with some very exciting James Bond music combined with the theme song from a 1970's police drama. There was no question...THIS was her music! Of course, she is too young to appreciate the familiarity and fun of the television show's theme song; she just knew she loved the way the music sounded to her own ears as well as how nicely it complemented her horse.

When Megan Fulgraff, local farrier and Adult Amateur, put in the video of her QH/Hanoverian cross gelding, it soon became apparent that he needed some "manly" music. Those of us watching had gone from being interested observers to



Mary Harrison (in chair) discussing the choreography with Katie Sanders

would-be "judges." We all had opinions and Mary welcomed them. When she put in a fantastic Elvis medley that suited this gelding to a "T," we all exclaimed during the "hunk-a, hunk-a burnin' love" music that this was our FAVORITE for this horse. And it seemed to suit Megan's taste as well...after all she is from Tennessee where Elvis' birthday is practically a national holiday.

Polly Yeago's Hanoverian mare looked best to light and airy music. Many of the musical selections suited the tempo of her gaits, but it was the medley of Broadway tunes that we all loved the most. And Polly loved it, too. The music accentuated her mare's elegant appearance and increased the look of elevation as she moved. It was uncanny how various styles of music affected the appearance of the horses as we watched their videos.

After lunch, the participants went out to the ring one by one to work with Mary on the choreography. Unfortunately for

Polly, her mare had an adverse reaction to a vaccine and was unable to participate. Pat McDaniels, who keeps her horses at North Star Training Center, graciously offered to loan Polly a horse for the choreography. Her thoroughbred gelding showed us all that at the age of 22, he still had some dance moves of his own! Polly drove home grateful for the gift of Pat's horse, and completely elated with her 1st Level choreography and music.

Katie enjoyed working through a 2nd level test that she hopes to be able to use in the not-so-distant future, and Megan will be humming "Ain't Nothin' But a Hound Dog" as she perfects her 1st Level moves.

This clinic organized by Adult Amateur rider Polly Yeago and sponsored by the NCDCTA, provided participants and auditors alike with an education, inspiration towards their own future of riding to music, and a thirst to learn more in the future. In addition to her vast musical experience, Mary Harrison is a strong proponent of quadrille riding, and has a welcoming and relaxing clinic format that may interest more riders in the future. If you have any interest in learning more about riding to music, please contact the NCDCTA board and let your opinions be heard.

A big thank you to Lynn Leath who volunteered her facility for this clinic and to the auditors who stayed to the end of the day and even helped "pack up!"



Mary Harrison (left) with Polly Yeago, the clinic organizer.

Letter to the NCDCTA Board

Dear NCDCTA Board Members,

I have just reviewed the 2007 HOY point system on the NCDCTA website. I read with concern the new policy enacted by the board on 2/13/07 which combines points that competitors earn at combined tests with those earned at a horse trials. I would like to request that the board reconsider this policy.

The cross country phase of a horse trial is the real "meat" of our sport. To permit points earned at a combined test to count for a HOY award in eventing is like saying a dressage rider must complete only two thirds of test to earn points to qualify for a HOY dressage award or like saying a rider can walk and trot in a dressage test but skip the canter and still earn partial points. The new policy, requiring the completion of only one horse trials per year, is certainly discouraging to eventers.

I believe the policy approved in February will also be discouraging to those riders who prefer competing only in a combined test. Although traditionally CT's have been used by eventers as schools to prepare for a horse trials, there are many competitors who prefer riding only the two phase for any number of reasons. I think this might be especially true for the young rider just beginning his/her career and who lacks the skills for the rigors of cross country or for those older riders (or older horses) who no longer want to run demanding cross country courses.

The preparation, training, and conditioning for participation in a horse trials far exceeds that required for participation in a combined test. Most people have fairly easy access to a dressage arena and stadium fences to school, but a cross country school often involves traveling and facility use fees.

All horse sports are expensive! The entry fee for a USEA recognized horse trials is well over five times the cost of an entry for a combined test. As the HOY policy is currently written, a competitor can enter one schooling ht and any number of combined tests and easily earn more points than a

competitor who is limited by budget to only four or five horse trials per year.

Eventing is alive and well in North Carolina. If this new policy is designed to encourage more eventers to register their horses with NCDCTA, I believe it will have the opposite effect. Please reconsider.

Respectfully,
Grace Leary

Dear Grace,

On behalf of the board of the NCDCTA, I would like to thank you for taking the time to share your views with us. We welcome the input of the membership as we make decisions that effect the organization. We have received a few other emails from NCDCTA members such as yourself, who have expressed similar concerns about the changes in the eventing categories.

First of all, I want to let you know that these decisions were not made lightly. The committee responsible for proposing the changes included our Event Chairman as well as others who have competed in eventing personally and those who currently have eventers as students. They took the task of updating the HOY guidelines very seriously.

Secondly, it is important to understand the purpose behind the new system. Yes, we are hoping to increase participation in the HOY program. While we know that the eventing community is going strong, the fact is that very few eventers register their horses for NCDCTA year end awards. We recognize six places in each of our awards divisions, however there are so few event riders registered for HOY points, that we often have categories with only one award recipient, or NO recipient. There are very few juniors registered, and it is clear that the vast majority of serious, elite event riders do not currently participate in the HOY program. Therefore, our goal is to be more inclusive and to attract the "hopeful" eventers.

We are adopting the view of the USEF

that now includes Combined Tests under the overall "eventing" umbrella. As you pointed out, the two phase tests are more along the lines of a schooling situation. We also agree with your view that the two phase test is akin to the walk/trot tests in dressage. We do not currently give walk/trot dressage awards and the new eventing point system does not recognize a combined test division. As another point of information...there were only 5 awards given in the adult CT category and this was a combination of ALL levels of combined tests. There were none in the junior division. Again...this speaks to the lack of participation in the HOY program by CT-only riders as well.

Therefore, it is our goal to attract those would-be eventers who are just getting their "feet wet", so to speak. And for those of you who are actively eventing, remember that the Combined Tests count for only half the points that are earned at a nationally recognized Horse Trial. Furthermore, we have raised the number of points that must be earned before you can qualify for NCDCTA year end awards. With these new guidelines, we fully expect to see the serious eventers receiving their just rewards for the extreme effort that goes into preparing and competing in the three phase event. But, we also hope to encourage those "hopeful eventers" to register their horses with NCDCTA and join in the fun at our annual awards gala.

In the meantime, please know that we will certainly be ready to revisit this issue in 2008 and beyond should the numbers increase.

I want to reiterate how important your opinion is to us. We appreciate all you have done for so many years to promote the sport. This sentiment holds true for the other NCDCTA eventers that have been expressing their views to us on this issue.

On behalf of the entire NCDCTA board, I thank you again for your interest and input,

Jennifer Mitchell
President, NCDCTA

Championships Pinned at Pinehurst Winter Series

By Sue Smithson

Three out of four shows in the Pinehurst Winter Dressage Schooling Show Series managed to squeak by with marginal weather this year, ending with the championship show February 18 at the Pinehurst Harness Track.

The hotly contested intro and training level division championship went to Diana Hoberecht of Southern Pines and Donna Andrews Tepatti's Whimzical Princess. The 5-year old Hannoverian mare was bred and raised by Tepatti, an LPGA pro golfer and new mother. At eight months of age, the filly broke her hip and Tepatti was advised to put her down. Instead, she stall rested her a few weeks, hand-grazed, then turned her out in a small pen. After only four months, X-rays showed the bones were knitting. Hoberecht took over the

ride during Tepatti's pregnancy, and the pair have enjoyed top placings at training level all season.

The upper level trophy went to another Southern Pines team, Rebecca Vick riding Jan and Bill Taper's appendix Quarter Horse gelding Bonanza. Taper bought the horse for pleasure riding, but after taking a few dressage lessons, she realized Bonanza had some talent for the white rectangle. Vick, 26, spent five years as Jim Koford's assistant trainer and is now taking clients of her own to teach and train.

Michele Lobsinger of Southern Pines and her 10-year old Irish gelding Able Sportsfield were undefeated in preliminary tests to handily claim the eventing division championship. For complete results, visit www.SportingServices.net

New Rule Changes From USEF for EVENTING

Updated: February 23, 2007

The following extraordinary rule changes were approved by the USEF Board of Directors. The below rules are not in the adobe formatted rule book.

EV140.8 Cross-Country Obstacles:

In the interest of safety, organizers are encouraged to construct obstacles using Frangible Pin technology wherever it is appropriate. Information on the appropriate applications of Frangible Pin construction is available in the USEA Cross-Country Obstacle Design Guidelines. Frangible Pins may be installed only by or under the supervision of Course Designers/Course Builders who have attended a USEA seminar on Frangible Pin construction.

EV147.1 Jumping Scoring.1. FAULTS AT OBSTACLES

*Knocking down an obstacle - 4 penalties

*First disobedience - 4 penalties

*Second disobedience in the whole Test at Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced - Elimination

*Second disobedience in the whole Test at Beginner Novice, Novice and Training - 8 penalties

*Third disobedience in the whole Test at Beginner Novice, Novice and Training - Elimination

(At Beginner Novice, Novice and Training, the provisions of EV149.1.c apply as follows: The clock will be restarted when the horse leaves the ground at the obstacle where the disobedience occurred or when the horse incurs a second refusal.)

*First fall of competitor - Elimination

*First fall of horse - Mandatory Retirement

EV141.1.a Cross-Country Scoring - this rule will officially go into effect March 1 after the USEF Executive Committee reviews the rule at their February meeting.

EV141.1.a Cross-Country Scoring

FAULTS AT OBSTACLES:

Disobediences -

- 1) First refusal run-out or circle 20 penalties
- 2) Second refusal, run-out or circle at the same obstacle 40 penalties
- 3) Third refusal, run-out or circle at the same obstacle Elimination
- 4) Fourth penalized disobedience on the entire course Elimination

It's Time To Begin Certifying American Riding Instructors

By George Morris

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All I can say is, "Better late than never!" The concept of certifying riding instructors is long overdue and should have been addressed 50 years ago.

Every official at a horse show has a license - the judges, stewards and course designers. Why not the teachers and trainers: I can think of very few, if any, other legitimate sports where an instructor can "hang out his shingle" whenever he wants. Many countries in the rest of the world insist on certifying their riding instructors via their federations.

During the 1980's, mainly due to the patronage of Thomas and Markus Fuchs, I conducted a lot of clinics in Switzerland for the Swiss federation. Mid morning at the very first clinic in Berne, someone from the Swiss federation ran rather hysterically into the indoor arena. According to Swiss law, nobody can teach riding in that country without a license. Well, of course, I didn't have a license and needed a special guest license, which rather miraculously appeared, thank goodness.

By presidential appointment, the U.S. Equestrian Federation put together a com-

mittee a year or so ago to get a handle on certifying instructors in the hunter/jumper discipline. (They've been doing it for 15 years in dressage and for 3 years in eventing.) Shelley Campf from Oregon is the chairman of this important committee and its members include Claudia Cojocar, Paul Cronin, Karen Healey, Candice King, Chrystine Tauber, Geoff Teall, Julie Winkel, and me. Each of us has a credible past-performance record and can bring something a little different to the table. We're also geographically diverse which is so important in this vast country of ours.

So far the committee has met twice in person in Harrisburg, PA, and once in person in Miami, FLA., and several times by conference call. I'm very much behind this committee, and I believe that we present a very legitimate front in presenting this idea.

The mission statement for the Instructors' Certification Committee is to preserve the American System of riding and jumping by developing an educational and certification program for all levels of trainers. As you all very well know, I'm a staunch supporter of our American method of stable management, veterinary science, riding and jumping. I have traveled, taught and shown horses all over the world, and I'm convinced of the excellence of our system, provided it's done right.

Our goal is to have the program up

and running for the 2009 competition year. Rather than dreading the prospect, I find it exhilarating to be able to prepare for the tests. I would like to suggest, for those who are interested in the history, philosophy and practice of American riding and jumping, that you pick up "American Military Horsemanship" by James A. Ottevaere. This is the very, very first book you should read before embarking on other horse-related study projects.

Let me quote David O'Connor, our federation president: "Instructor certification will be a huge part of equestrian business. For our own continuing education and standards, this program is vital to the integrity of the equine industry." David is a horseman of the highest class, and his vision is telling us this is the right thing to do.

Some of the advantages to the program include: creating a certified educational program based upon our American forward riding system, including recommended teaching and training goals and methods; providing continuing educational opportunities for all trainers; development of teaching skills; including the principles of the hunter, jumper and hunter seat equitation disciplines; teaching knowledge of all aspects of our sport, including stable management and horsemanship practices, safe-

(continued on page 26)

Knowledge Can Save Lives

By Gayle Glisson -Kuhlberg

After breeding horses since I was 16 years old one would think I had seen it all. As all horse people know, you never stop learning.

This winter I have had an experience with a little known disease all breeders need to know of - Lawsonia intracellularis or Equine proliferative enteropathy.

We all now have to be aware that as wildlife has become more crowded on less open space horses will be exposed to new and a higher number of diseases. This one is known as a porcine disease (pig) that has now shown up in deer, dogs, rats, ferrets, rabbits, foxes and most recently in horses. It is spread mostly by environmental contamination with feces of infected animals. Bacterial culture is difficult, and it takes quite a while to have a diagnosis.

This is a tale of Wee Lass, a recently weaned Holsteiner filly. She was born a premature, full term, tiny, 47 lb. twin. She had a 5 month gestation mummified twin. Mom had been ultrasounded for twins. Lassie was a healthy, precocious little teddy bear at weaning. I weaned her a bit early for fear she was getting too heavy on her legs. Mom's milk was for a full size baby and Lassie had legs the size of my middle finger when she was born. Of course she never thought there was anything wrong with legs going in all directions as she told all of us she could reach mom herself by the time she was 36 hours old. She also was going to kick the stuff out of us if we didn't let her get her own milk. Of course her attempt at a kick or buck was to get one or two hind legs off the ground by two inches. At five months Lassie could keep up with the other foals, she just ran harder. Brave and friendly, even cuddly would be a good description of her. She did look more like a quarter horse than a Holsteiner foal because of the way premature foals catch up.

A Holsteiner 3rd generation from import for me, she is the second filly Fantaisie has ever had. I have waited 14 years for a second filly. Fantaisie has produced 2 approved stallions and Gadiva her daughter has also produced and approved stallion son. I have just had a couple of females from this mare line and was worried for years I would lose it. I am probably the only breeder that gets upset for having so many colts.

My little girl was saved because she

had Dr. Kirsten Tillotson fighting for her life as hard as I was. Dr. Tillotson mentioned Lawsonia when she first saw Wee Lass. E.coli, Salmonella and Rhodococcus were the first we tested for; Lawsonia being rare we only tested later. Dr. Tillotson started treating her for it before we confirmed it because her protein levels were rock bottom and her white blood cells over the roof. The drugs are human drugs and it was hard to initially gather enough pills to crush, we got drugs from 3 different pharmacies the first few days. Lassie's associated symptoms were fever of 102, depression and watery diarrhea. Other systems to look out for are weakness, rough hair coat and weight loss. Lassie was going down hill fast and then her jugular veins thrombosed because her clotting factor was so out of whack (the protein levels) and the catheter for the fluids going into her every couple of hours.

I called Dr. Tillotson and she said to remove the catheter. Now with her veins blocked her head started to swell with fluid. The little one started to respond to the drugs targeted to Lawsonia within 24 hours; however her first week on Nexcel did not do it. The biosponge the vet came to administer each day at first and then skipping days later helped a lot, it seemed. But, in the meantime the filly's head was now so swollen her lips were like wood and her eyes were slits. Each day the Doc and I would go back and forth on ending her suffering; one of us always talked the other into waiting a few more hours. Most of the time it was Lassie herself that gave us the hint to continue. Once we pushed her outside the stall to see and she lifted her heavy head (kept 3 inches off the ground most of the time) and tried to whinny to the other horses. Another time after we were sure her kidneys were gone, no urine in 36 hours, got her outside, she peed! Well it is now one week since her last drugs and she trotted 5 days ago and had a little suspension for the 10 strides yesterday!

I stand in awe of this filly's tenacity, will and spirit. She has been a survivor in one struggle after another since conception. I

would have given up if it had been me. She looked forward to her syringe of medicine of one sort or another being shoved through solid unmoving lips; she greeted me I took the vile stuff knowing I was trying for her. I was giving her corn oil and corn syrup at one point to give her the energy to fight, then Dr. Tillotson got some critical meals used in hospitals and I syringed that down her throat since we could not tube feed her too often and she wouldn't keep a small nose feed tube in. After three weeks she started to be able to eat a little Grass Plus high protein concentrate, by Progressive. Michael at Hurdle Mills drove 90 miles round trip to deliver some more when we found it working to keep her alive. Dr. Tillotson drove 90 miles to us almost daily and stayed working for 5 and 6 hours many a day early on.

We did this all on farm. She could have had immediate protein help if I had opted

“...the filly's head was now so swollen her lips were like wood and her eyes were slits.”

for the Vet School, Doc said at least 10 liters of plasma at \$300 each the first thing. I believe if she had gone to the clinic I would have spent between \$12,000 to \$15,000 and still she would have had maybe a 25% chance. I have 22 horses with 8 foals on the way and had to make the hard decision. It was the right one for this special little one and for me. I am truly thankful for Dr. Tillotson (an intern specialist) for her knowledge and devotion.

I want the breeders out there to know and inform their vets of this disease being spread by wildlife and to catch it early. I have been in the business for over 40 years and had never heard of it. It seems to effect only weanlings, when the mare's immunity is gone and maybe the foal just has a weaker immune system. I believe this because we found a titer to the bacteria in 4 more of my weanlings. I was really perplexed earlier in the fall because they were not thriving as my foals always had. I wondered about the wormer, how shipping had effected it, my feed, the fact I had a mare and foal from Florida come for 2 weeks 4 months ago. Now I know, so I hope to save any of you that get exposed the guessing. Good luck this spring foaling to you all.

Tamarack HT cont'd *from page 1*

A, the top three dressage tests faulted on cross country, clearing the way for advancements. Tamarack's own Apache and Lila Gendal moved up four spots to claim the win, but Rachel Parker aboard Tamarack's young Irish breeding stallion Formula One made the largest jump, advancing six spots to claim fourth in the horse's debut.

The two dressage leaders also faulted out in Open Novice, leaving Krista Rose of Winterville N.C. and By His Grace in front at the finish.



Krista Rose and her By His Grace were Open Novice winners at Tamarack.

Photo by Sue Smithson



Denny and May Emerson's young Irish stallion Formula One made his competition debut at Tamarack Horse Trials with Rachel Parker in the irons.

Photo by Sue Smithson

The greenest bunch of all debuted in the maiden divisions, but the courses were so basic it was all about dressage for them. Tracey Smith-Oliver of Apex led the way in the senior class with her new Irish gelding Jack. Mikaela Kantorowski of Aberdeen also held on to her lead with Ranger Heart to top the junior class. For complete results, visit www.tamarackhill.com.

Certifying Riding Instructors cont'd *from page 18*

ty, professionalism, client/trainer relationships, and the rules and regulations governing our sport; providing opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas with other certified professionals and mentors from all levels; and increasing instructor credibility, professionalism and visibility to clients.

Being listed as a certified instructor in the U.S. Hunter/Jumper Association's trainers directory, as well as potential insurance premium discounts, will also amount to the substantial benefits.

There are, of course, a few prerequisites for enrollment. To be eligible for the program, you must have a current USHJA membership, have declared professional status, and be at least 18 years of age. All certified instructors must have CPR/first aid certification, which is not all that difficult to learn how to do.

These are the proposed concepts for certification. The Instructors' Certification

Committee is continuing to develop the concepts of the program, which potentially will be divided into a series of categories. Once you've passed the test for category 1, you'll become eligible to test in the next category, creating a ladder system for certification. Each category adds knowledge as a building block to the previous category.

Most of you will be curious about the testing criteria and the qualifications under consideration. There is much that I don't know and much that I would like to know better. This is my chance to study, learn and review.

To start the process, you'll need a resume documenting your teaching, training and/or riding experience: three references from individuals with knowledge of your ability to teach, ride or train; and a score of 85 percent or better on a computerized multiple choice test.

To maintain your certification at a level, we're considering that every three years,

individuals will need to meet the following requirements: 1) attend a USHJA trainers symposium; 2) submit an updated resume documenting experience teaching, training and/or riding, and 3) give proof of current CPR/first aid certification.

As I've said, I believe this tremendous project is long overdue as not only necessary, but also mandatory. From many, many perspectives, this is a great concept, a direction we have to go for the future of our sport. I'm hoping to see it implemented very, very soon.

Relish your homework, your "brushing up" activities, your reading and don't wrinkle your nose too much. It's a great moment to learn more and to become a better horseman. Good luck, good riding, good teaching, and good training!

If you have any questions or comments regarding this certification program, please contact Melanie Fransen at mfransen@ushja.org or (859) 225-6960.