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Visit the ANRC Website (www.anrc.org) for the following important information:

- 2003-2004 Membership Applications
- Calendar of Events
- Articles of Interest

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to ANRC, the Federal tax identification number, 501 C-3, non-profit status, for the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD) is 520886491.

Mark Your Calendar: *The ANRC National Intercollegiate Championship in 2004 will be held on April 17 & 18 at Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Virginia.*

For more information, contact: Jon Conyers
(434) 381-6367 or jconyers@sbc.edu

Other upcoming events:

March 13 - Equitrial at Sweet Briar College

May 14 - Rating Center at Sweet Briar College

October 31 - Equitrial at Sweet Briar College as part of the Commonwealth Games of Virginia

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The ANRC set of videotapes and workbooks: **A**The American Forward Riding System for Instructors and Riders[®] is expected to be available by August of this year. Details will be provided in the next newsletter and on our website www.anrc.org.

Paul Cronin=s eagerly-awaited new text on forward riding *Schooling and Riding the Sporthorse: A Modern American Hunter Jumper System* is also due out this August

AHorses Everywhere Will Appreciate This Book[®]:

**Paul Cronin=s New Text on Forward Riding Due Out This August
by Pam Whitfield**

AMy roots are in forward riding, and it has always made sense to me,[®] writes Joe Fargis in the foreword to Paul Cronin=s forthcoming book, *Schooling and Riding the Sporthorse: A Modern American Hunter Jumper System*. Paul=s roots are also in forward riding, and he has translated a lifetime of riding, learning, and teaching into this project, which promises to introduce a whole new generation to the principles of forward riding and the development of the American sporthorse.

AI=ve tried to update *Commonsense Horsemanship*,[®] states Paul. **A**This book is very much based on Captain Littauer=s forward riding system.[®] Along with Fargis= endorsement, the text includes a statement by Mary Littauer. Due out August 1, 2004, *Schooling and Riding the Sporthorse* is also the first horse-related book to be published by the University of Virginia Press.

AThis book is very much for riders, instructors, and the ANRC,[®] says its author. **A**People want to know more about forward riding, and I hope it will be useful to college programs and will be used as a text for courses.[®] The book includes fourteen chapters, introduces a progressive schooling system, and even covers selecting a horse and handling the foal.

AThe text includes sections covering position, position theory, and controls,[®] says Paul. **A**It

also goes into conformation and movement, teaching stabilization, then working on the bit and schooling on the flat, over fences, and across uneven terrain. With 50 photos, 28 illustrations, and an appendix about setting combinations and jumps for different levels of schooling, the book provides ample visual examples and practical applications of the theory.

Paul draws on his own background in riding, both in the field and show ring, to write a historical perspective of the American forward riding system in his book's first chapter. Paul rode under Captain Littauer during two-week clinics at the Groton Hunt Club, and shorter clinics at the Norfolk Hunt Club and the Millwood Hunt Club (all in Massachusetts) as a junior, as well as under Littauer's pupil and ANRC National Judge Honora Haynes, and participated in rider rating clinics. He traveled to Long Island to work with Littauer as a teenager, and developed a life-long friendship with his mentor. In fact, after Paul completed a master's degree in community planning, Littauer recommended him for the director of riding position at Sweet Briar College.

He was promoting forward riding to a country that didn't have it, recalls Paul. Fort Riley made its contribution, but what Littauer did for riding was extraordinary. He taught amateurs to school horses, which was vital, according to Paul, since prior to the late 1960s, horse show professionals as we know them today really did not exist. Only amateurs were eligible to show, horses were required to have field hunting experience, and few professionals made their living by coaching at shows. You didn't have a coach at the in-gate, so you had to know a lot, and you had to help each other out, explains Paul. That's why Littauer wrote to and taught the amateur.

In the 1950s and 1960s, when most horse shows were still held in fields and the horses jumped in natural terrain, lessons were about schooling the horse, adds Paul. Like Littauer's *Commonsense Horsemanship*, Cronin's text is directed at amateurs schooling horses and the people teaching amateurs. This book is for the amateur rider and the trainer who wants to teach amateurs schooling and riding. I'd like to think I'm giving them tools so they don't have to depend on a coach or trainer, and I'd like to think they could be a better pupil and get more out of their trainer, with the help of this book.

And let's not forget the horse, who benefits from a secure, non-interfering rider and a compassionate relationship. Joe Fargis speaks for the value of a calm, confident horse in the text's foreword when he writes, Horses everywhere will appreciate this book. If the horses could talk, they would say, >Read this book; this is how to ride me.=

Adapting the Forward Riding System to Today's Hunter-Jumper Industry: An Interview with Corky Shaha

For the past twelve years, forward riding proponent Corky Shaha has taught and trained at Wells Bridge Farm, in Littleton, CO, a business she co-owns with Paul Rohrbach. She traces her success in the hunter-jumper industry to her

early days at Jane Dillon=s riding school, and an ability to adapt the forward riding system to the modern show ring.

Corky rode under the late Jane Dillon at the Junior Equitation School in Vienna, VA, in the late 1950=s and early 1960=s. AWe were really fortunate to ride almost yearly in clinics with Captain Littauer,@ she said. AI feel like I got the very best education possible. The best part is that I can take a beginner rider of any age all the way up through Medal/Maclay level.@

While studying under Mrs. Dillon, Corky met Joe Fargis. ATo earn riding lessons, Joe and I used to be leaders for the beginner classes,@ she recalled. AWe would lead them around while they learned to steer and control the horse. So I heard hours and hours of lessons being taught. Later I taught what Mrs. Dillon called the pre-riders, the six and seven year olds who needed one-on-one instruction.@

Unlike today=s over-scheduled children, Corky spent much of her time at the barn, immersed in forward riding. AWhile at Mrs. Dillon=s, I just lived it,@ she said. She finds the forward riding system just as relevant to the hunter-jumper industry today. ARecently Joe said to me, >I keep finding myself going back to the things that we learned as a child.= He was talking about the relaxation and stabilization of the horse, and the correctness of the rider, and I would say that=s the basis of our business at Wells Bridge.@

She finds herself being referred to as the Aposition Nazi, because we really stress correct position for correct communication with the horse,@ she explained. ANeither Paul nor I can emphasize enough to our students that they=ve got to have a solid foundation and non-interfering jumping position. We start our students out grabbing the mane and work on position until they can press knuckles into the neck, and with equitation riders we work on the automatic release.@

ABoth Paul and I also focus on flatwork,@ she continued. AWe spend a lot of time on correct flatwork because horses need to be able to stretch to the bit on a long rein as well as be able to ride in a connected way, to collect and extend the gaits, stretching like an accordion.@

Corky stresses connection and relaxation as key elements of forward riding. AIf the horses aren=t relaxed and don=t know how to stretch through their back, then none of this works very well,@ stated the former AHSA dressage and combined training judge.

Both veteran Olympic show jumper Joe Fargis and veteran Olympic dressage rider Jessica Ranshausen give clinics at Wells Bridge. AHeaven forbid that we should use the word >dressage= in the hunter world, but one of the influential

people in our lives here is Jessica," said Corky. "When she does clinics, she adapts flatwork for hunters and jumpers and emphasizes the partnership between horse and rider."

Corky sees an emphasis on flatwork as crucial to success in the hunter and jumper rings today. "The forward riding we did in the 1960=s has to be updated for the show ring now," she explained. "In the old days, we didn=t count strides or worry about lead changes," she stated. "You got a nice rhythm, you galloped cross-country, and the jumps just came up. But that has changed. There are hardly any outside courses. Hunter rings have gotten small and we often show in tight indoor rings."

As courses have gotten tighter and more technical, so have the questions asked of horse and rider. "So the balance and bending is just primary," she explained. "Riders need to understand how to create transitions, bending, and suppleness. They have to know those things in order to successfully ride today=s more technical courses. If riders don=t have a position that allows them to do that, they=re in trouble."

According to Corky, the horses must also be schooled to those aims. "We do not make a distinction in our program for whether a [green] horse is going to be a hunter or a jumper," she explained. "The horses all do the same flatwork, being able to shorten, being able to lengthen. So the riders need to learn how to use their aids and weight effectively to achieve these transitions in the show ring. We try to be subtle and invisible with the aids."

"That said, with the jumpers we work on more advanced engagement, such as fast rollbacks, which are like canter pirouettes," she added. Corky relies on the fundamentals of the forward riding system to keep her horses competitive. "For example, the stabilization and long rein work is important for an under-saddle class," she added.

Corky and Paul also strive to keep the horses happy through a long show season that includes the Indio circuit, Tucson, and many of the midwestern >A= shows. "We don=t jump a lot of courses at home during show season," she said. "We do a lot of cavaletti work and use poles to set up exercises rather than jumping courses."

And she looks for opportunities to get outside the ring as well. "We don=t get to ride cross-country, but we do go to Spruce Meadows and ride in big fields there," she said. "It=s sad that there aren=t a lot of outside courses, but everything is being built up. We have half-million dollar homes within a stone=s throw of our arena."

Over several decades in the business, Corky has found herself adapting to the

shifting needs of riders and the changing demands of the industry. "We really work with students more on the bending and the transitions because it's become necessary," she said. "There need to be some updates to the system to include more dressage, but the basis of the system is still going forward."

"One of the things we really focus on is being a team with the horse," she added. "That's something that's not emphasized in today's horse industry, because the professionals often set the horses up for their students to ride, but we still teach that teamwork. They're learning how to ride, not just how to horse-show."

"We have students in children's hunters, junior hunters, Medal/Maclay, and adult amateurs," Corky said. "We have three Grand Prix horses this year, and Paul won the \$30,000 Grand Prix in Tulsa in April. The system works for all levels and that's what I think is so wonderful."

Corky, Part II: From "Race Horse" to National Hunter Champion

One of Corky's recent projects, a hunter mare named Carmen, made the lead story in *The Chronicle of the Horse* recently along with her new rider, Ken Smith. The Dec. 19, 2003, article featured Ashland Farms, Smith's operation in Wellington, Florida, and focused on his barn's recent success at the National Horse Show in November.

Corky reschooled the mare over a period of more than two years, using the principles of forward riding, before Smith's client Henrietta Armstrong bought the bay mare as a potential children's hunter. Smith rode her to the National Horse Show Hunter Championship in Wellington last fall, as well as the regular working hunter championship and a reserve in the second year green working hunter division.

"Carmen was not an easy horse in the beginning," recalled Corky. "My partner Paul Rohrbach and I found her on a trip to Germany. I got on her first to see if she would be suitable for an amateur adult. She was like a racehorse. When you pulled on the reins she threw up her head and went faster. Paul absolutely loved her scopey jump and felt that with time she would be a winner."

Corky and Paul had their work cut out for them. "I would say that our methods followed forward seat tradition with the balance and impulsion that the current show ring demands," she explained. "We were lucky to have an owner that supported our efforts and enabled us to take the time needed." Their client Mary Dunahay bought Carmen as a prospect, and "realized that she might not ever ride her in a show, but was intrigued and interested in the process of developing her."

Corky and Paul focused on relaxation first. "Carmen went to every show with us, and sometimes didn't show. She was very talented, but had no mouth, and resisted every attempt to soften and relax her," said the trainer. "Time was the key. The number one priority was relaxation and rhythm."

As a pre-green horse Paul did a lot of simple lead changes with her," Corky continued. "A flying change was a signal to throw her head up and run away cross firing. There was absolutely no demanding with Carmen. She had to trust the rider as well as the grooms that handled her."

Rohrbach focused on stabilizing the mare on the flat. "Hours were spent in stabilizing and transitions from one gait to another and in the gaits. Paul never schooled Carmen over the jumps on warm up days or did a warm up class," explained Corky. "We also did not do much lunging, just enough on the first day of the show to loosen her up. On the days that she did not show, she was ridden out on long hacks. Jumping was never a problem, nor was boldness. After two years Carmen finally began to relax and stretch through her topline into the bit, and then started her show ring success."

Carmen was winning consistently on the Colorado circuit when Smith first saw a videotape of her. Then he watched her perform at the Pennsylvania National in October 2003. "I just loved her when I saw her go," *The Chronicle* quoted Smith as saying. "She's even easier than we thought. We took her right to Washington [D.C.] the next week and showed her there, and she was reserve in the regular working there—the best thing about her is that she's very light across the ground. She's got a big, open canter, and she's quite brave. She's easy to find the jumps on, and super-scopey."

By going back to basics and trusting in the power of the fundamentals of forward riding, Corky Shaha and Paul Rohrbach turned a high-headed jumper into a national champion working hunter—yet another example of how taking the time to reschool a challenging horse can lead to success, whether in one's backyard or on the show circuit