



June 2007

## Emerson Focuses on the Future

By Patricia Smith  
*The Pilot*

*Patricia Smith is a freelance writer/photographer who lives in Vass. The story is reprinted by permission of The Pilot, a newspaper in Southern Pines, N.C.*

Denny Emerson doesn't spend a lot of time looking back. He's too busy looking forward, enjoying life and wondering what "lies around the bend."

Mention the sport of eventing in the United States, and the name of Emerson is sure to crop up. His most recent achievement in the sport is being inducted into the U.S. Eventing Hall of Fame. With all he has achieved, the hall of fame honor is simply another memory he can add to the scrapbook he is nowhere near completing.

"The hall of fame is all about the past," Emerson says. "If

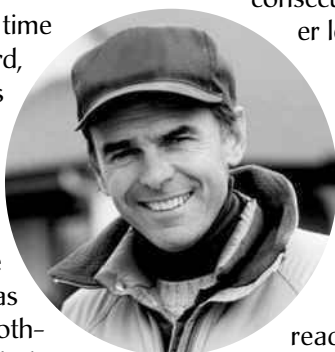
you start thinking that way, then you're done."

But his past achievements are the reason he is in the hall of fame. Emerson, a two-time United States Eventing Association president, has been involved with the sport since 1962. At the age of 65, one of his goals is to reach 50 consecutive seasons riding in the preliminary or higher level.

Emerson, an eventer, trainer, horse breeder, author and coach has a long list of accomplishments, paced by his successful career in eventing. According to a leading equestrian publication, *The Chronicle of the Horse*, Emerson is "one of the 50 most influential horsemen of the Twentieth Century."

Anyone who knows Emerson or who has read his "Between Rounds" columns in *The Chronicle of the Horse*, knows that he is passionate about breeding. Emerson and his wife, May, have stood 15

*(continued on page 14)*



## My First Horse Trials

By Steve Randle

I am a 28 year old mail, recently married and I've been riding for ten months. Remember these three facts, for they are very important in the story I'm about to tell.

Why does a 28 year old suddenly take up riding? It's simple really; I had two choices: I could NOT ride, get plenty of sleep, watch my favorite TV programs uninterrupted, enjoy relaxing after work, play golf on weekends and only see my wife three days a week (her non-riding days.)

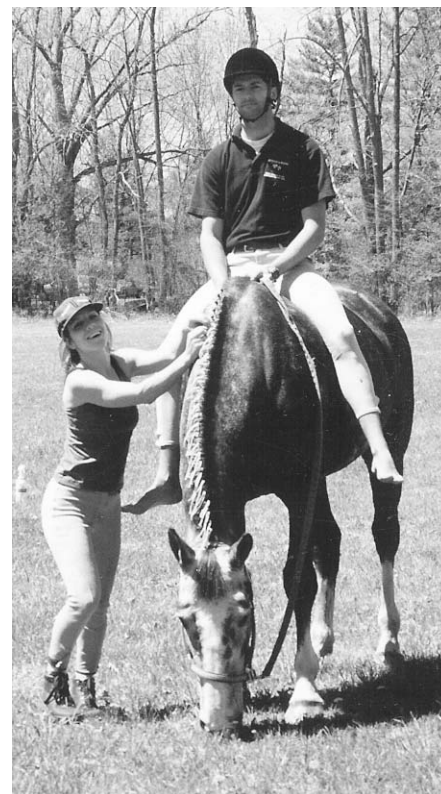
Or, I COULD take up riding, wake up for shows at 4:00am, come home late smelling like manure, learn to contort my legs in painful position, develop bloody scars from pinching stirrup leathers, mount a 1,200 pound vege-

tarian that spooks at gray rocks, somehow convince myself that this is all fun, and be able to see my wife seven days a week. Like I said, it was a really simple decision - I took up riding.

I'm also male. So what's my point? Well, this sport has some crazy rules that say you can't just show up in jeans, a t-shirt, and some comfortable shoes to do your ride. No, of course not. The rules say that you must get all prettied up and wear really tight pants, long boots, a jacket and a hat in 95-degree weather. Easy enough, I'm thinking. I'll just open the catalog, order my clothes and be done with it. Wrrroooong!!

As any guy reading this can relate, finding men's riding clothes is a nightmare. Being 6'2" I ordered pants long

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Steve, Christine (wife) & Seaspray

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We are pleased to announce that the current membership directory is now online and regularly updated on the [www.ncdcta.org](http://www.ncdcta.org) website; navigate to membership, then directories. Access is password protected, and this information was emailed out on May 8. If you did not receive this, then either your email address on record with us is invalid, or your email account bounced it. You can check the new option on the website home page to verify your information, and/or unblock mail from [NCDCTAmembers@nc.rr.com](mailto:NCDCTAmembers@nc.rr.com)



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## 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](mailto:NCDCTAnews@mac.com):

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# New Dates for the 2007 Succeed/USDF FEI-Level Trainers' Conference

Lexington, KY (May 10, 2007) - United States Dressage Federation (USDF) announced October 27-28, 2007 as the new dates for the 2007 FEI-Level Trainers' Conference to be held at Starr Vaughn Equestrian Center in Sacramento, CA. The conference will feature Jan Brink who is currently ranked sixth in the world for FEI dressage riders. In addition to the two-day riding conference, a lecture will be held on Friday, October 26 with Jan and the sponsor of the event, Freedom Health, makers of Succeed digestive conditioning system. Immediately following the Friday night lecture, there will be a welcome reception, sponsored by Schleese Saddletit 4 Life, with both of these events being held at the Marriot Sacramento Rancho Cordova.

All eligible trainers' conference attendees and their guests, up to a maximum of three, must be USDF participating members.

In addition to being ranked sixth in the FEI/BCM World Dressage Ranking, Jan also was the 2005 winner of the Dressage Championships in Aachen, was awarded the

Individual and Team Bronze at the 2005 European Championships and was awarded the Individual Silver at the 2003 European Championships.

"We are so excited to have Jan as our featured presenter at this year's trainers' conference," stated Kathie Robertson, senior coordinator for the program. "Jan encourages riders to find a horse that will compliment their riding style."

For more information and a list of eligibility requirements for the 2007 Succeed/USDF Trainers' Conference featuring Jan Brink please visit the USDF Web site at [www.usdf.org](http://www.usdf.org) or contact Kathie Robertson at (859) 971-2277 or via e-mail at [trainersconference@usdf.org](mailto:trainersconference@usdf.org).

Founded in 1973, the United States Dressage Federation is a nonprofit member organization dedicated to education, recognition of achievement, and promotion of the sport of dressage. For more information about USDF membership or other USDF programs, please visit [www.usdf.org](http://www.usdf.org), e-mail [usdressage@usdf.org](mailto:usdressage@usdf.org), or call (859) 971-2277.

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Eventing and Dressage  
*(continued on page 9)*

# Minutes of the NCDCTA Executive Board Meeting

## April 2007

President Jennifer Mitchell called the NCDCTA executive board to order at 1:10 p.m. April 19, 2007 at Dave Stuckey's office in Carrboro. Present: Jennifer Mitchell, Dave Stuckey, Robin Brueckmann, Donna Kelly, Julia Dearborn, Anita Quinn, and Sue Smithson. Excused: Lynn Leath.

With NCDCTA's mission statement in the forefront, Jennifer initiated a theoretical discussion regarding our 12 dressage shows and one horse trails. It was determined that sponsoring competitions is within the boundaries of our "promotion of the sport" mission, but questions arose regarding the ethics of continuing to sponsor undersubscribed shows which lose money.

Jennifer presented a motion to discontinue the April show in Asheville, and move the Latta Spring show back to its original date as the first weekend in April. Donna seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Grappling with the complexities of managing competitions and the justification of the time requirements thereof, Jennifer lobbied for the formation of an independent competition oversight committee. It was decided that annual contracts with our three managers (Janine Malone, Kay Whitlock, and Vicki Schenter) and an external audit of the show accounts should answer the most pressing questions and needs. Robin agreed to follow up on finalizing the contracts for 2007. The implementation of a universal auditing system and the possible reduction in the number of NCDCTA sponsored dressage shows was considered, but more data is needed before making these decisions.

Regarding the NCDCTA Fall Horse Trials at The Fork, Sue spent time with Vicki Schenter last weekend and reported that David O'Connor has been hired to design the courses and Abbey Dondanville will secretary. Plans for the Oct. 5-6 horse trials are in full swing, and spring organizer Linda Dreher has been very generous with her advice and counsel.

Jennifer read an email from recognition chairman Sandie Dennis and brought up some issues regarding NCDCTA recognition policies. With accuracy, credibility, and transparency as top priorities for the Horse of the Year program, current recognition policies were revised. Jennifer made the following motion: starting in 2008, out of state competitions will not be NCDCTA recognized. Donna seconded, passed unanimously. All competitions in the Tryon - Landrum area will be considered in state. The current policy which allows eventers to report out-of-state results individually was unchanged.

To further streamline the tracking of points, Jennifer made a

motion that all USEF recognized dressage judges, event judges and USDF L graduates are eligible to judge dressage at any level in NCDCTA recognized schooling shows. Julia seconded, passed unanimously, and effective for 2007. Sue agreed to make these changes on the website at the next routine update.

To further implement policy compliance, results submissions, and regard for recognition status, an office fee for recognition applications was discussed. Robin moved that a \$20 fee be levied for all competitions applying for NCDCTA recognition, starting in 2008. Sue seconded, passed 6-1. Julia cast the dissenting vote, arguing that USEF recognized competitions should be charged more than schooling shows. As above, individual out-of-state eventing results submissions remain unchanged, and exempt from any fees.

Policies regarding volunteer cards were reviewed. Robin moved that expiration dates be disregarded, and the expiration prompt deleted at the next printing. Dave seconded, passed unanimously.

Julia reported on the dressage education projects. With breeding season in full swing and the related time constraints of the breeders committee apparent, the stallion extravaganza planned for the NCDCTA Sport Horse Breed Show was rolled over to 2008. An adult amateur dressage camp is planned for August 18-19, 2007 in Blowing Rock. The historic Blowing Rock show grounds offered favorable rates and a block of rooms was reserved at the Days Inn, although participants may book their own accommodations. NCDCTA will help subsidize the clinic to keep prices low.

Anita reported on the eventing education projects. "Intro to Eventing" clinics will be offered across the state to encourage the grass roots, but no firm dates, venues, or clinician bookings were available yet.

It was decided to upload the membership directory on the website on a password protected page to discourage spammers. The hard copy directory, usually published in June, is already budgeted for this year, but the 2008 board may elect to discontinue publishing if the online version is deemed successful and user friendly.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. This afternoon meeting was extraordinary, as the agenda was too large for a routine evening meeting. The next board meeting is set for May 1, 2007.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Smithson

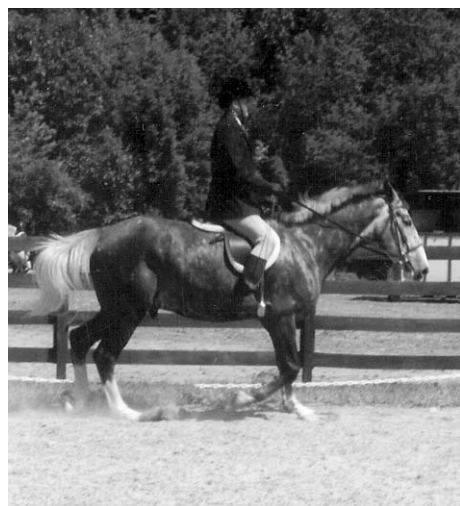
# My First Horse Trials *continued from page 1*

and they still only came to my mid-calf. And of, what a bargain price these pants are! For ones that don't fit they are a cheap \$75! If you want ones that have more than two millimeters of fabric and actually go down to your ankle in length, well, those are more like \$250.

Oh, decisions, decisions - do I pay my car payment or buy a pair of riding pants. Hey, I've got a horse, I don't need a car! Luckily, the shirt was easy. I just retired one of my faithful, old white business shirts, and retired an old tie as well. O.K. I'm getting there, now I only need a jacket.

Working in Manhattan helps because I thought I would just visit the largest tack shop in Manhattan. On entry, I saw literally hundreds and hundreds of blue and black and other colored riding jackets. Great, I thought. This is going to be easy. Being on my lunch hour, I didn't want to waste time, so I asked for help in finding a men's 42L riding jacket. The assistant led me past the dozens of racks of children's coats, then past the dozens of racks of women's coats until we came to the very back corner of the store. She pointed to a half-rack containing the eight men's coats and says innocently, "OK, lets see if we have your size."

Needless to say, they didn't have my size, their warehouse was empty as well, and they weren't expecting another shipment for two, three months. With my show in less than three weeks,



the assistant suggested that I call regional tack shops and handed me a list of hundreds of tack shops up and down the eastern seaboard.

Twenty-three turned out to be the magic number. I called twenty-three tack shops throughout New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia and finally found a tack shop in Kentucky that had a men's blue 42L riding coat in stock. They UPS'd it to me overnight and I was very happy with it. Wow, another steal I thought, they practically give these suckers away for a mere \$325!

I'm also recently married. I thought this would work to my advantage having a wife and her 30 plus years' riding experience next to me, guiding me through the whole event. And oh, what confidence she provided me!

Two days before the show, we attended a cross-country clinic at the same location the horse trials would be held. She was riding our horse, Sea Spray, and I was just a spectator. We both agreed that this would be a good idea to get our horse used to the grounds and also do a little schooling before the show.

During the warm-up Sea Spray did a big spook and she fell off. Just in case you weren't sure, that is great for one's confidence to see a seasoned rider fall off the horse you are to ride within two days of your first event.

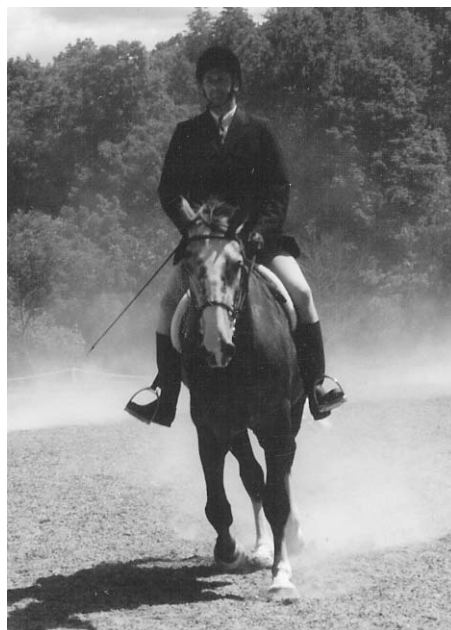
Instead of completing the clinic we took Sea Spray home and went to the ER. X-rays showed three broken bones in the hand. Great. Now I have a horse that spooks and my groom is lame. That means no braiding and I have to do all the tacking up and untacking myself.

Furthermore, now that Sea Spray is not all braided up and pretty the judges will be looking less at him and more at me. That's not the strategy I envisioned. Oh yes, these are pleasant thoughts leading into your first competition. What time do we have to get up for this thing anyway—4:00, 5:00 am? Is this when I'm supposed to get excited, or

does that come later?

I finally arrived at the show for the world to see what a city boy in tan tights can do in dressage, show jumping and cross-country. Of course, this being my first show, some of my in-laws had to attend. No, I couldn't save face and do this first show alone. Instead I have an entourage of family, video cameras and a baby stroller.

In the warm-up ring Sea Spray didn't buck, rear, spook or even snort at the other horses. I took these as all good signs and was ready for my number to be called. I entered at "A" and we started our test. Tracked left, rode the corner down the length of the arena and everything seemed fine. Then,



without warning, my horse took three very quick steps to the right and went out the arena at A.

Disqualified! Why? Sea Spray saw my sister-in-law's (Wendy Cracovia) purple baby stroller 20 yards from the arena and spooked. From what I hear there are lots of horses that don't like strollers, bikes or anything else that has wheels on it. So this what I married into? I have a wife that has a passion for horses and in-laws that like to spook them. That's great, just great!

As far as dressage is concerned,  
*(continued on page 22)*

# Emerson Focuses on the Future continued from page 1

stallions at their farms in Southern Pines and Vermont.

"I've been interested in breeding since I was 17 years old. I had a Morgan stallion named Lippitt Raymond that I bred to mares for \$50 a shot," Emerson says. "Recently, I was at the Fork (an eventing competition) and there were horses by Loyal Pal, horses by Epic Win, and horses by Right of Light (all stallions that have stood at Emerson's Tamarack Hill Farm in Southern Pines).

"Breeding is something that transcends you. Long after I'm dead and gone, with any luck, people will be eventing and riding horses from stallions I stood."

## Memorable Horses

Emerson has ridden a few horses in his lifetime.

One highlight of his career was riding Victor Dakin with a clean round on the cross country phase at the Burghley, England, World Championship Three Day Event in 1974. His clean ride secured a team gold medal for the United States Eventing team.

"Burghley was my first big International event," Emerson says. "As an American eventer, all we ever heard about was Burghley and Badminton in England. The idea of actually going over there, competing and then winning was really something."

The other members of the gold medal team were Mike Plumb, Bruce Davidson and Donald Sachey.

"Victor Dakin was the springboard enabling me to get into the business of teaching eventing," said Emerson.

Emerson and Victor Dakin also won the National Three Day Event at Radnor in 1976. That same year, Emerson and Dakin qualified for the Olympic team but never got to compete.

"One of the low points of my career was the day before the competition in Bromont, Canada, when Victor Dakin stumbled and sprained an ankle and could not be on the team," Emerson says. "The horse was sound a week later. What do you do? You go on."

Emerson also puts York on his list of most memorable horses. York was a New Zealand cross-bred that Emerson rode to win the United States National Championship on in 1979. York was also the United States Eventing Association Horse of the Year in 1979.

"York was a more gifted horse than Dakin," Emerson says. "York was better in Dressage and a scopey jumper. Dakin was a little on the hot side."

## Not Resting

Emerson obviously lives by his "you go on" theory.

In 2004, at age 62, Emerson realized a lifelong ambition and rode in the 100-mile endurance Tevis Cup held in California aboard an Arabian horse named Rhett Butler.

"In order to win a coveted Tevis belt buckle, you have to finish the ride within 24 hours with a horse that is fit to continue," Emerson says. "I finished the ride at 4:15 a.m. after 21 hours straight in the saddle. I wanted to do a 100-mile endurance ride since I entered my first endurance ride in 1956 in Vermont when I was 15 years old. I never thought it would happen. It is one of my most memorable achievements, along with Burghley."



**Denny on King Oscar, Rolex, 1996**

However, Emerson doesn't rest on his laurels. He is continually setting new goals for himself. Emerson hopes the horse he is riding now will help him to reach his goal of 50 consecutive seasons eventing. Emerson bought Loftus Fox, an Irish sport horse, five years ago as a 60th birthday present to himself. To date, Emerson has won three events at the preliminary level with Loftus.

"It's really up to luck at this point as to whether I reach the goal," Emerson says. "You hope you don't die or get injured or get sick."

Emerson is also the consummate teacher. A graduate of Dartmouth College, Emerson began his career teaching high school English. Emerson's passion for horses led him to eventing. In 1991, Denny was presented the Lifetime Master Instructor Award by the American Riding Instructor Certification Program.

*(continued on page 19)*

# Minutes of the NCDCTA Executive Board Meeting

## May 2007

In attendance for the teleconference was Jennifer Mitchell, Dave Stuckey, Lynn Leath, Sue Smithson, Robin Brueckmann, Anita Quinn. Excused: Donna Kelly, Julia Dearborn.

### President's Report

Jennifer Mitchell reported show management's response to the board's decision to drop the Asheville show. An extensive discussion followed in regards to spring shows and dates. Jennifer agreed to discuss options with show manager, Kay Whitlock, and come back to the board with a recommendation by the June meeting.

### Dressage Committee Report (given by Jennifer Mitchell)

Julie Garnett reported that the next Instructor Certification Workshop will be undersubscribed by two participants.

Due to a scheduling conflict, Harriet Peterson will not be able to lead the adult amateur camp planned for August. Instead, Eliza Sydnor and Jeanne Carver have agreed to be the clinicians.

### Eventing Chairperson Report

Anita Quinn has been busy trying to organize clinics to include all members of our eventing community. The "Intro to Eventing Clinics" will be hosted by

Lesley Stevenson of Charlotte and possibly Patricia Roberts of Mebane. They are looking into the possibility of arranging stabling for an overnight (2-day) clinic-format as neither have extra stabling available at their facilities. If they cannot arrange stabling nearby for participants, the format will be changed to multiple one-day clinics.

Alison Coates of Southern Pines is willing to host and organize a clinic at her farm late summer/early fall. She will query interest and prices on the bulletin board.

Whitney Ellis is the NC Rep for the Area II Adult Riders and is very interested in coordinating with Anita to organize some clinics. She is located in North Durham and has access to a large indoor. She'd be interested in getting a monthly clinic series going, with rotating local clinicians each month. Whitney also has access to a summer house on Lake Gaston and mentioned the possibility of doing a small-scale "summer clinic" with training in the morning followed by water sport activities in the afternoon.

Cheryl Microusticos is the editor of the Area II Newsletter and has offered free advertising for NCDCTA-sponsored eventing activities, including clinics, educational activities, the NCDCTA Horse Trials, etc. Circulation includes NC, VA, PA, NJ, MD, and DE. Anita finished up by reporting that Abbey Dondanville officially accepted the position of entry secretary for the NCDCTA Horse Trial.

### Communications Chair Report

Sue Smithson reported that the NCDCTA now has 761 members, and that the Membership Directory is now available online. Sue asked permission to send out an email blast giving members access to the new online directory. Lynn made a motion that we send out an email blast giving members the user name and password to open the new NCDCTA membership directory. Jennifer seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

Sue also brought to the board's attention that we will be updating the Trainers and Business directory on the website.

### Treasurer's Report

The only real mandate I have is using CCF Committee (Capital Campaign Fundraising Committee) instead of "we" - just for clarification purposes.

Dave Stuckey reported that Janine Malone sent us \$15,000 from the CDI account.

\$5000 had to be transferred back to Kay Whitlock for the show account, but will be transferred back to Dave by the end of August.

Dave is busy raising funds for the Capital Campaign Fundraising Committee. He raised over \$600 at the last annual meeting. He has a member that has committed \$1000 in matching money for the next ten members that write a check for \$100. The CCFC will have a silent auction at the 2008 annual meeting and awards event, and will be raffling a trip to Lexington for the World Championships in 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM

Respectfully submitted  
Lynn Leath  
Recording Secretary

## Emerson continued from page 1

He spends his days riding and teaching at Tamarack Hill Farm when he's not competing.

"The cross-country phase of eventing is a really dangerous sport," Emerson says. "People put themselves at risk. Most people get hurt because they don't understand the physics of trajectory -- they go too fast with horses too strung out. If I can help teach someone how to balance the horse at a jump, it will keep the rider safer. That's the challenge in teaching and I will have done something good if I can meet it."

### 'Looking Ahead'

Emerson's desire to do good also helps explain his passionate embrace of land preservation.

He received the "Equestrian Land Conservation Resource Leadership Award" in 1999. His passion for land conservancy is demonstrated by his service as trustee and president of the Green Mountain Horse Association in Vermont, as trustee of the Carolina Horse Park, and as trustee of the

Equestrian Land Conservation Resource.

"Of all the challenges facing horse people in the future, land preservation is the scariest," Emerson says. "By 2050, there will be over 400 million people in the United States. Where will people ride? Don't wait until it's too late. Get involved in land preservation, whether it's helping preserve Hobby Field, the Carolina Horsepark or the Walthour-Moss Foundation. If you're not doing it for yourself, do it for your children or for your grandchildren."

That willingness to take on challenges has carried Emerson far in his life, a life that appears to revolve around the future. Being nostalgic about past accomplishments is not where he chooses to expend his considerable energy.

"I would rather think about the foals being born this spring or the young horses getting started in their careers," Emerson says. "Looking ahead is what keeps you vital. It's a matter of thinking something interesting lies around the bend."

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*"The hall of fame is all about the past," Emerson says. "If you start thinking that way, then you're done."*

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## Trainers cont'd from page 3

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Cell: (336) 430-5594

eMail: [mapwattsdaughter@yahoo.com](mailto:mapwattsdaughter@yahoo.com)  
Freelance dressage trainer located in greensboro airport area. Will drive to you at your facility. Available for clinics and coaching at shows. Specializing in goal oriented dressage riders of any level.

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Equiventure Farm/Rougemont, NC  
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Indigo Stables, Huger SC  
Middleton Stables, Charleston SC

## Visit [ncdcta.org](http://ncdcta.org)

View membership information and check horse registration

View show results

Track HOY points

Link to the NCDCTA message board where late-breaking news is often announced and members are discussing a variety of topics.

Find important contact information

Members receive free advertising on the website's classified section

# My First Horse Trials continued from page 22

there usually isn't much to be afraid of as a novice rider. There's nothing really to spook at (for most horses anyway) and if you do fall off, the ground is the dressage is usually pretty soft.

Cross-county, however, is just the opposite. As a rider you need to learn to ride an approach to a jump and be on constant watch for anything that might distract your horse. Having been jumping confidently for about six months and having my share of "flying dismounts," I was fairly confident about jumping small logs, coops, ditches, etc. I signed up to do the lowest level - Maiden.

Upon starting to walk the course I thought everything looked quite simple. The first couple of jumps were an 18" log and then to a small cross-rail. But, whoever dreamed up the third jump must have enjoyed watching others suffer.

The third jump was a bright yellow painted jump surrounded by two large diamond construction signs. I had no doubt my horse would have a field day with this one. If he spooks at strollers, what in the world would he do with this? The rest of the course seemed tame with more small vertical, hay bales, etc.

After a half-hour warm-up, my number was called and I started the cross-country course. Well, at least I tried to start. You see, Sea Spray didn't really want to leave his new friends and was intent on backing up every time I squeezed him with my legs. Luckily this division did not have a time limit. After a few encouraging kicks and a slap on the shoulder we were off to the first jump.

The first and second jumps went smooth but then we approached the third construction sign jump. Not wanting a refusal I immediately transitioned to walk after the second jump so we could gingerly walk to the next jump past the fierce horse-eating yellow signs. Of course, this strategy backfired.

Instead of spooking at the signs, Sea Spray caught a much more frightful sight in his left-eye...a cross-country jump with a big straw hat sitting under an umbrella with a cooler next to her side. So now instead of spooking to the left away from the signs he spooked to the right toward the signs. I didn't know whether to get upset at the judge or thank her. Now Sea Spray had totally gone by the signs without seeing them and was heading straight for the jump, which he cleared from a nice balanced trot. So much for predicting what my horse will do!

The rest of the course went fine with him trotting the whole distance and clearing each one like he was bored with them. However, he did make certain to find every hidden judge and look at him or her with both eyes, even if it meant

taking the jump almost sideways. Which leads me to question: Where in the rule book does it state that all cross-country judges must wear the biggest, obnoxious straw hat they can find and then surround themselves with a battery of brightly colored beach supplies including a chair, umbrellas and cooler, and then position themselves in a hidden location that you can't see until you're within refusal distance of the jumps? I haven't found it in any rule books but I know that it is written somewhere because all judges are dressed and equipped with the same spooky intent. Do they go to some special covert training for this?

Show jumping was great! No judges with straw hats and no purple baby carriages! Just eight jumps and my day was over. I decided to trot the whole course. The first six jumps were almost push button. I aimed Sea Spray at a jump, he

trotted over it, and I would turn and point him to the next one. Twice he tried to canter, but I stopped him. On the seventh jump he cantered after the landing and I allowed him to continue to the eight jump as it was only ten yards in front of me and I saw no harm. Surprisingly, we had a clean, calm, confident round. "How boring," I thought.

After he left the arena Sea Spray immediately put his head down below his knees, turned his head and neck to the left, and stared at me with his left eye as if to say, "Whoever is on my back, I would dearly appreciate it if you would dismount immediately because I am done, and out of patience with your inept riding ability!"

Now I know why they call it "Eventing." It is always one event after another leading up to an during a show. They should really call it "Non-Eventing," don't you think? Because at the show isn't that what you really want—for nothing eventful to happen?

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*"...do I pay my car  
payment or buy a pair  
of riding pants.  
Hey, I've got a horse,  
I don't need a car!"*

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Note: Wendy Cracovia, NCDCTA News Editor, is the "sister-in-law" in this story. Sea Spray, an Irish Draught Sport Horse, was owned by her sister, Christine Randle who successfully competed him through Preliminary. Unfortunately, Sea Spray succumbed to an untimely death in April 2005 when he had to be euthanized following a ruptured diaphragm.

