

Horse lovers rally to preserve their sport

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Post Staff

BEAUMONT - Horse lovers from around the area gathered Saturday in Beaumont to admire horses, learn more about them, and share experiences.

But the fact remains that the opportunities for horse ownership and even riding experiences are limited to a very few children and adults. "I don't think my daughter will ever have her own horse. Being a single parent sometimes I don't have enough money to pay for the hamster or gerbil food," says Beth Davis, a Harveys Lake

mother who brought her daughter, Sandy Slody and three young friends to just experience the horses.

Harry Yatsko and fiance Karen Orloff, co-owners of the Peaceful Valley Equestrian Center where the horse demonstration event was held, are determined that more children and people in general come to appreciate and experience horsemanship. Says Harry "this is our way of giving something back by holding the annual event here once a year."

Karen, an ophthalmologist technician and horse lover originally from Florida, met Harry Yatsko in 1987 in Wilkes-

Barre. Their relationship has taken Harry's family dairy farm and turned it into an equestrian center offering boarding and riding lessons. "And we don't frown on Western riders," says Karen emphatically. "All riders are welcomed here. Our philosophy is to make horseback riding accessible to all."

More than 200 people attended the afternoon events according to Sandy Forster, the area representative of the Pennsylvania Equine Center, an offshoot of the American Horse Association.

Accessibility to horseback riding seemed to be on the minds of many of the people

gathered at the center. Sandy Forster talked about trying to enact a new liability law in Pennsylvania that would disallow frivolous law suits brought against stable owners. Presently liability insurance is so expensive that most stable owners don't dare offer trail rides to the general public. Harry Yatsko talked about a new trespass law that would not allow a lawsuit in the event someone trespassed and was subsequently injured while riding on someone's property. These and other laws need to be changed before the general public can again enjoy horsemanship, he said.

Corrine Klug and Candice Bittner came just to have fun and see the horses. "You get attached to them," says Patti Bittner, Candice's mother. "Candice got a horse for her birthday and it's something we can both share, walking the horse up the mountain and standing there."

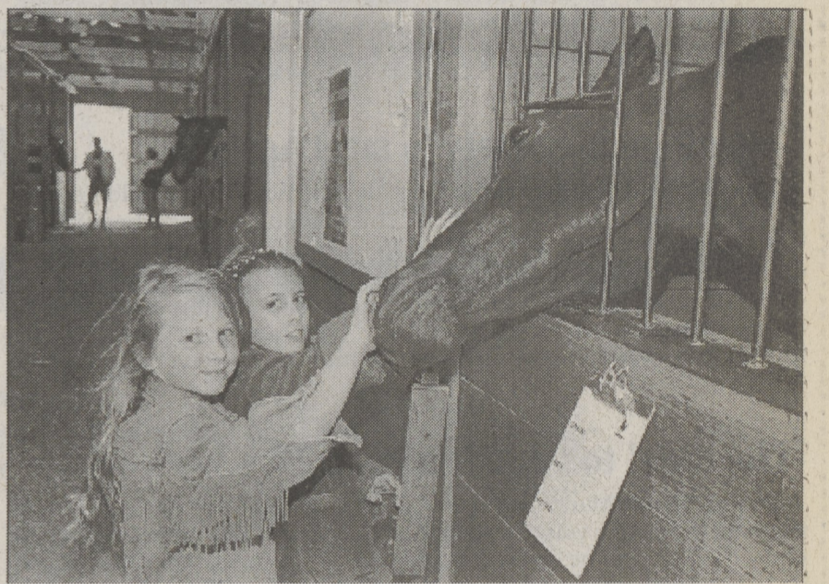
Sue Schilling, herself a horse owner, cooed over one of the day's most popular mounts, a black Fresian stallion named Thor. The breed is very people-oriented, beautiful and calm, having been bred for knighting jousts, carriage work, and dressage. Annette Hasenberg of Bloomsburg says it's all true. Her Fresian stallion walks up to her kitchen window with mares in tow to check and see where she is and what's going on.

John Maskalis, Sweet Valley and his sister's entire Girl Scout troop of would-be horse owners came to experience the horses and learn about their care. "This is a great opportunity to know horses first hand," said his mother.

So besides buying your own horse, stable, and 10 acre farm, what's the best way to experience horses? Karen Orloff says the best accessibility for children to horses is through local chapters of the 4-H in your area. Call 825-1701 for information.



John Maskalis and a buddy.



Corrine Klug, left, and Candice Bittner taking a close look.



Diane Czajkowski rode Thor, a Fresian stallion. Lauren Madiera, foreground, admired his forelocks.

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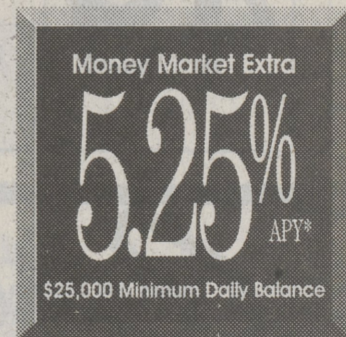
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