

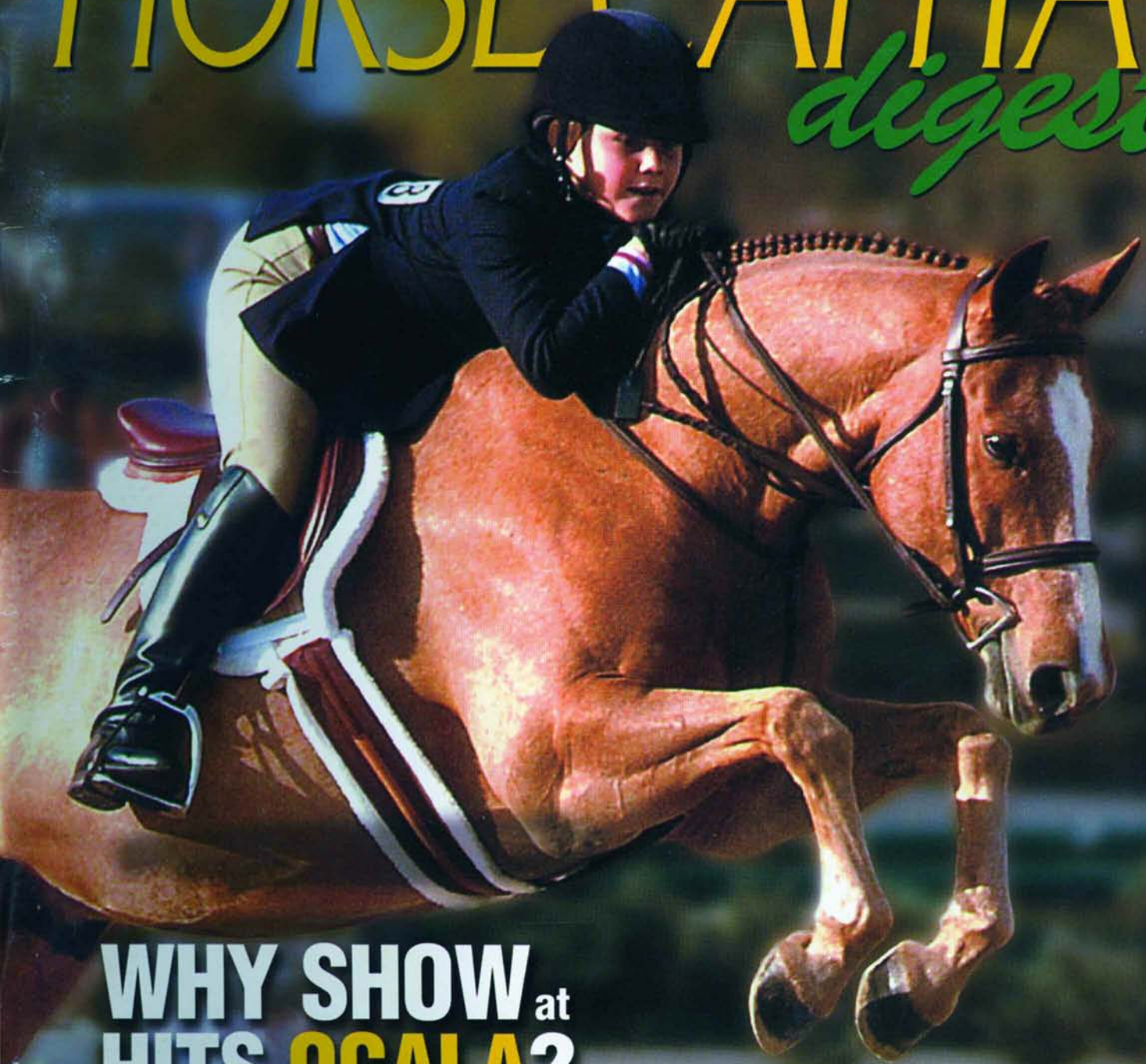
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF HITS OCALA

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WHY SHOW at HITS OCALA?

Polls from HITS Ocala's Post Time Farm

SUCCESS at HUNTER LANE

Lili 2006

Local Coach Stacy Lane-Sanderson is an All-Around Champ

EQUINE ULCERS: Treatment & Prevention

SERIOUS FUN AT HUNTER LANE

David Sanderson and Stacy Lane-Sanderson's Hunter Lane, Inc., gives young riders a fun, safe, and positive start into the pony world.

By JANET FORBES

For nearly a decade, children in the Marion County area have been learning diagonals, leads, and distances at Hunter Lane, Inc. in Ocala. Even more important, thanks to owners and managers David Sanderson and Stacy Lane-Sanderson, the students have been learning life skills – like responsibility and hard work – as they safely ride, show and care for their hunter ponies. And the bonus? Kids have fun in the process.

“Stacy is so successful because she works hard and she has done her homework,” David said of his wife’s talents as a coach.

While Stacy is the main coach at Hunter Lane, David runs much of the work behind the scenes, from sales negotiation skills, book-keeping, computer processes, booking hotel reservations, scheduling and billing.

David also keeps the kids coming to Stacy in “assembly line fashion” both at home during lessons and at the shows. The partnership has formed a solid local business through honest pony sales and training, giving lessons that emphasize safety, and letting kids have fun while learning responsibility.

“We don’t have the kind of kids who can afford three ponies,” David explained. “Most of their parents can’t afford it or just don’t want to. Every kid in this barn has to buy and sell their first pony. They are taught that you have to sell one before you buy a new one. They all understand that this is a business too.”

Sharing her Skills

Stacy has admitted to being a horse lover her entire life, despite growing up in a family with no animals. Her grandfather bought her first pony when she was 8 years old, and Stacy claims she spent more time on the ground than on the back of that pony.

“But that little pony taught me dedication, respect and humility,” she said. “I never rode with top trainers. I rode with the backyard people.”

At 18, Stacy found her niche in Ocala by teaching youngsters how to ride.

“A lot of trainers don’t like to work with the younger kids,” Stacy said. “I think they (children) are the most innocent and fun ages to teach. They are in it because they love it.”

Through word of mouth, more and more people sent children to ride at Hunter Lane. Soon, people around the country began sending ponies to train and re-sell. It didn’t take long for the business to



Stacy Lane and “Hunter,” the official farm mascot at Hunter Lane, Inc.
Photo by Janet Forbes

take off. Today, Hunter Lane maintains 32 ponies and 35 clients between two barns.

Keepin’ it Local

“It is not a requirement that you show to be in our barn,” Stacy explained. “We do have clients who can afford to show every weekend and some that can only afford to do one show every couple of months. I also have kids who have been riding with me for years and they never show or buy a pony, but they are here every week for their lesson.”

The Sandersons limit their traveling to shows in Florida in order to take care of the many students in Ocala who still come to Hunter Lane for weekly lessons. Stacy also realizes that her kids can’t miss school. The majority of Hunter Lane riders are straight-A students who have a lot of homework – plus have to squeeze more than 20 hours a week of riding into their schedule.



Seven-year-old Devin Seek and her pony, Wood You Please, train at Hunter Lane, Inc. In 2006, this team won the RMI Short Stirrup Circuit Championship.

Hunter Lane 2006 Highlights

In 2006, Hunter Lane students hit the 'A' show circuit with a strong presence, even though Stacy confesses she never planned to show on the 'A' circuit against some of the best riders and ponies in the nation. Taking none of the credit for herself, she adds, "It just happened that my kids ride well and are competitive at that level now."

Ashton Alexander, a 9-year old who attends Shady Hill Elementary, rode her pony, Imagination, to a fifth-place finish in the nation in green pony. Seven-year-old Devin Seek, a second grader at Grace Episcopal, won the 2006 Short Stirrup Circuit Champion at HITS on her pony, Wood You Please. The team also took home three more Short Stirrup Circuit Championships at RMI, NFHJA and CFHJA. Seek also received the 2006 NFHJA Overall High Point Equitation Champion by defeating every rider in the NFHJA with the most points last year. Molly Jank, a fourth grader at St. John's, was the Zone 4 children's hunter pony champion on Making Magic. (Zone 4 includes 6 states in the southeast United States.) She also claimed

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM STACY LANE-SANDERSON OF HUNTER LANE, OCALA

1. Work students within their boundaries and teach them to exploit their best qualities.
2. Know their limits and teach them to master the basics. Have them practice what they are good at and don't let them try to be something they are not.
3. Students should be fully responsible for their own pony. Brush the mane and tail, curry it, and pick its hooves before the saddle goes on.
4. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know it all. Teach humility. It is an underrated characteristic.
5. When you have down time at the shows, listen to what other professional have to say, help them with their kids, set up jumps...do whatever it takes. But never stop learning.

"I may never make it to the MacClay Finals. It's not even a goal of mine. My biggest goal is that I teach the kids safely, that they learn correct balance and equitation and that they have serious fun. We do things correctly but we have fun doing it. If we win, that is icing on the cake...if it happens it happens...These kids are not forced to ride. They do it because they LOVE to do it."

— Stacy Lane-Sanderson

*Got Hat Hair
After the Show?*

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*Ocala rider Jennifer Whitt, 16, was named USEF Zone IV Children's Hunter Champion in 2006, training with Hunter Lane, Inc.
Photo by Lili Weik*

the title of the CFHJA circuit champion. The oldest rider to compete under Stacy's guidance was Jennifer Whitt. The 16-year-old sophomore at Trinity Catholic also claimed a Zone 4 Champion

Children's Hunter Horse title on Duval Street along with high-point horse and circuit champion.

With all these titles and champions, Hunter Lane has grown and established itself as a barn full of serious regional and national competitors. Yet the owners still refuse to take any credit for the victories.

"We helped create these riders," Stacy said. "These kids do it themselves day in and day out. It's all about being well-educated and prepared. They all ride at least three or more ponies of different skill levels every day to develop a stronger leg and quicker reflexes. I don't let these kids go to step two until they have mastered step one."

Stacy has been criticized on occasion for her conservative teaching techniques, but she doesn't apologize – she knows that one fall can send a student back to square one.

"Some kids are more resilient than others," she said. "They'll fall off and get right back on and finish the course. Other kids fall off and you can't get them back in the ring. You have to make sure the child is prepared to do what you ask them to do."

The Hunter Lane entourage will have 12 children, each with their own pony, competing at HITS over the next five weeks. Throughout 2007, they expect to be on the road for 40 weekends. **H C D**