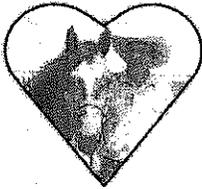


Hey Neighbor



For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Native Kansas Horsewoman Campaigns For Educational Aspects Of Stock Horse Groups

Costs to keep a horse have never been higher.

Travel expenses for going to horse shows are the highest ever.

Some of the best prospect horses ever are being offered for sale at rock-bottom prices.

This unusual equation is exactly why the Stock Horse of Texas Association was formed. Consequently, the

group has received such a strong following that an American Stock Horse Association is being formed.

Horse owners throughout the country are being informed of those endeavors, and invitations and welcomes are being passed their way by a native Kansas horsewoman.

Carrie Sharp was raised on a farm near Riley, was

prominent in the Riley County 4-H program, owned and showed horses and graduated from Kansas State University with a master's degree in equine reproductive physiology.

"The Stock Horse of Texas is an association which was started by a statewide planning group in the mid-1990s and incorporated in 1998," explains

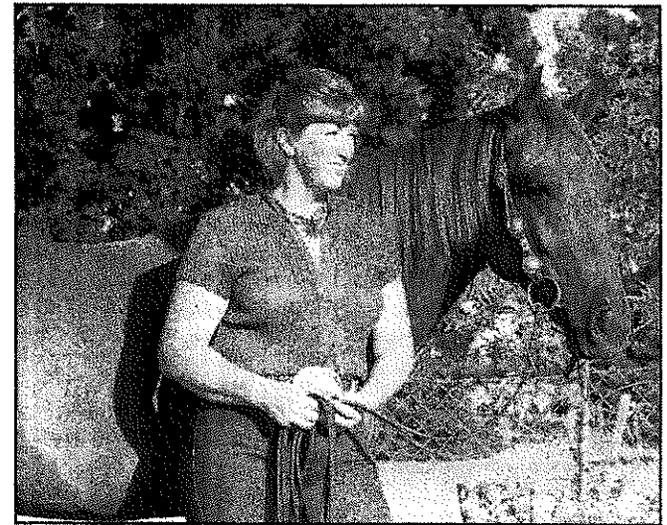
Sharp, county 4-H agent at Kaufman, Texas, and active participant and promoter of SHOT, acronym for the group.

"Its purpose is education for western horse enthusiasts to ride and train an all-around stock horse that can be ridden on the ranch, in the arena or down the road," continues Sharp, who has involved many of her county youth and adults in the clinics and shows.

"SHOT's goal is to teach rider knowledge and skills to maximize horse trainability, performance and safety by offering affordable, fun and standardized western stock horse riding clinics and competitions," Sharp clarifies.

So popular has been the combination of learning and competing activities in

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Riley County native Carrie Sharp serves as an Extension 4-H and youth development specialist at Kaufman, Texas, and has been active in the Stock Horse of Texas Association. That group has been so popular that an American Stock Horse Association is being formed with the purpose of educating western horse enthusiasts to ride and train an all-around stock horse. Sharp trains and rides her gelding Duke in the SHOT events and uses knowledge gained to help others.

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Texas, a decision has been made to form a nationwide group with the same objectives.

"History will be made when the newly formed American Stock Horse Association has its first national exposition, clinics and championship show at the Heart of Texas Fairgrounds, November 21-23 in Waco," Sharp announced. "We encourage everyone to bring their horse, attend the workshops and competition."

Officials of SHOT, including prominently known and respected B.F. Yeates,

executive secretary, have created ASHA to meet the demand of stock horse enthusiasts across the country who want to establish state or regional affiliate groups that follow SHOT's clinic and competition philosophy, formats, rules and guidelines.

Record-breaking growth in SHOT is evidenced by a 350 percent membership increase in 2004. In 2007 alone, more than 1,000 riders participated in clinics, with more than 4,000 entries in competition. A record 1.6 million people visited SHOT's website last year.

"Those groups requesting

to be recognized as an ASHA affiliate will be required to have an association with an education mission," Sharp relates. There will be a collegiate division in addition to youth and adults.

During the kick-off event, there will be a full day of clinics for training and showing the versatile stock horse, plus education seminars on organizing ASHA affiliates, conducting live "hands-on" education seminars and designing an ASHA competitive event to fit membership clientele.

The national show will include five full divisions: youth, novice, limited non-

pro, non-pro and open divisions.

"Along with promoting educational opportunities for western stock horse enthusiasts to ride and train a versatile western stock horse, the ASHA will encourage the use of standard rules and guidelines for conducting clinics and judging competitions of its affiliate groups," according to Sharp.

While there are an increasing number of horse organizations throughout the country, with many facing financial stress due to the overall distressed economy,

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Carrie Sharp assists Texas Stock Horse Youth Team members Catlyn Wold and Sarah Murff with training their horses for upcoming events including the first American Stock Horse Association clinics and championship show at Waco, Texas, November 21-23.

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Sharp contends that the stock horse group serves as a solution to these dilemmas.

Purchase price has always been the least cost of horse ownership, with upkeep, training and showing expenses rapidly multiplying that initial outlay.

"Top prospects can now be bought for less than ever thought possible," Sharp admits. "There isn't much that can be done about horse care and travel expenses, but SHOT has given many owners an opportunity to do their own training and also compete successfully in shows at their personal level."

Sharp has not only seen many youth parents and oth-

ers she's advised become more involved in training and showing, but she's also utilized SHOT to further develop her own riding abilities. "I compete in the non-pro level at the shows, and am also available to help 4-H members with problems that arise when they're working with their horses," Sharp notes.

Owning five horses personally, Sharp still has her "old Palomino, Reed," which many Kansas acquaintances can recall her showing before becoming a Texan.

"He's still at the farm near Riley, but I have other horses I'm training and showing here. I'm really interested in the cattle classes, especially working cowhorse," she

says. "I try to ride as much as possible, but keeping up with my work as a 4-H agent limits the work with my own horses."

Graduating from college in December 1996, Sharp moved to Texas, trained for an Arabian operation, assisted with developing a breeding program there and became a 4-H agent in the fall of 1997.

"The gentleman I was training for also let me coach a horse judging team, so I got a head start on what it was like to be an agent," recalls Sharp, who coaches horse judging teams as part of her diverse job require-

ments. In passing, she noted that youth from her county have had state llama and miniature Zebu champions in the past year.

Her horse judging teams have won a number of competitions, including those on the national level. While often called to judge horse shows, Sharp wants to keep her amateur show status and therefore turns down those paying opportunities.

"Sometimes I will assist in officiating a competition, but I insist that the show committees give any token stipends to the judging team travel fund," Sharp com-

ments. "I've also had my judging team members serve as judges as a group at several shows. Those make excellent workouts for them."

Heavily involved in 4-H hippology contests when in Kansas, Sharp has introduced Texas to the competitions which test members' diverse knowledge of horses. "They hadn't ever heard of the word 'hippology,' but after I explained how the programs work in Kansas, they've really taken hold here, too," states Sharp, who has helped develop the program on the state level.

Anxious to share her enthusiasm for the educational aspects of The American Stock Horse Association, Sharp extends a welcome to contact her by e-mail (clsharp@tamu.edu) or telephone (972-932-9069) to learn more about the group. Information is also available on the website: www.stockhorsetexas.org.

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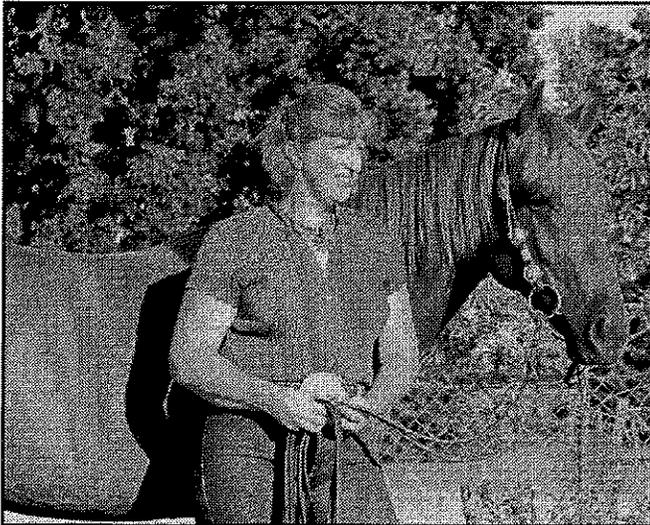
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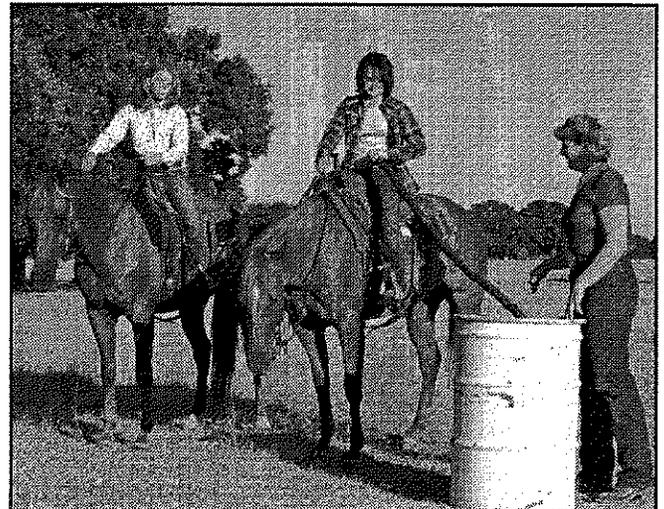
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