

### **Judy Richter's long-awaited return to the Northwest**

World-renowned hunter-jumper instructor, author and horsewoman, Judy Richter, returned to the Northwest Dec. 8 and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to conduct a clinic at Legacy Hunters and Jumpers, Inc. in Redmond, Wa.

Despite the chilly temperatures and some snow, 20 riders from around the area participated in the clinic with one of equestrian's greatest horsewomen. Judy, a licensed "R" Judge and who is also on the Board of Directors of USA Equestrian, has been training horses and riders for over 40 years. The clinic included riders ranging greatly in age and experience.

Judy, who is also a columnist for *The Chronicle of the Horse* and is based at Coker Farms in Bedford, N.Y., has spent many years riding and training alongside her peers and some of hunter-jumper legends including Buddy Brown, George Morris, Joe Fargis, Norman Dello Joio and many other great Olympic stars, riders and trainers of our era. During the clinic she would often reference humorous but educational anecdotes of these great horsemen. Including quips about how to set jumps properly, something that George Morris is known to pontificate about during his clinics.

For many of the riders, her recalling of these classic voices of yore, sprinkled additional flavor to the clinic, basking the riders in a warm glow of memories. For others, it was their first time hearing of these equestrian giants who have shaped our sport today.

Beyond learning a great deal about riding from a clinician such as Judy, it's valuable to our sport for riders to attend clinics to get exposure and history of the sport.

Judy's experience as a clinician made for a very efficient day with lots of details packed into each session. Before each exercise, whether on the flat or jumping, she very meticulously explained the purpose, so riders knew what they and their horses would get out of each exercise.

"The exercises were really hard, but the directions and corrections were really clear," said Maggie Berkes, who rode her 10-year-old Dutch mare, Nacari, in the adult hunter group. "There was a young horse in the group that was unable to do the trot jump exercise. So she had them do it at the canter and they were successful. She was flexible about the exercise."

The warm-up exercise, which included two cross-rails set on the diagonals at the short end of the ring, combined balance, control, pace, rhythm and accuracy. Packing this much into one warm-up exercise only comes with a great amount of experience in how to evaluate and get the most out of a short time with new riders. Judy also has a very positive style to her teaching; with every criticism came even more words of encouragement.

"She makes corrections in a very positive way. For every negative she gives you 4 positives," said Shelly Kerron, owner and trainer of Legacy Hunters and Jumpers, Inc., who hosted the same clinician 10 years ago. "She keeps the level of the task to the level of the individual, but still stretches you with the exercise, so you feel like you've been successful and accomplished something."

The clinic was well attended by spectators as well as participants, and the riders look forward to Judy's return to the Northwest.

Ali Heron and Kelly Schmidt