

Horsing around once every month



Above, Dena Jo White rides during an event in last Saturday's horse show. Below, little David Pratt has a good time on a horse, even if he can't reach the stirrups. At right, Ray Winslow rides during another event Saturday.



By SUSAN HARRIS

Once a month in Perquimans County horse shows are held at each of the county's two show rings, Hertford Saddle Club and the Perquimans County Horse and Pony Club.

Some folks may think there's nothing to hopping up on a horse and riding around a ring a few times, but trained showmen will tell you differently.

According to most riders, it takes a while to get a feel for a horse; to become a team and present the confident and knowledgeable image a judge expects when you enter a ring to show your animal.

Coupled with the hours of practice and training is the expense of owning a good show horse. Preston Nixon, who breeds pleasure horses for show and sale, says his horses go for \$1,000 to \$3,000 these days.

Add that to the cost of a good saddle (around \$500), feed, having the horse shod, veterinary fees, a horse trailer, riding garb and entry fees to show your animal in competition, and the cost of horses as a hobby soars.

But everyone who rides and loves horses seems to think it's worth it to own and ride a well-trained and bred animal.

From young to old, riders and their cheering squads flock to the horse and pony shows, keeping their fingers crossed and their eyes open watching for mistakes for which the judge may downgrade.

Preston Nixon has been breeding and training horses since 1966 when his youngest daughter, Charlotte,

became interested in riding. Although Charlotte no longer rides, Nixon recalls that she was quite a horsewoman at one time, winning top prizes in nearly every class she entered.

Nixon now works with two of his grandsons, Clint Winslow and Nicky Nixon, and believes both of them show a lot of promise.

"I like to green-break horses," Nixon reveals, and his policy is to train and show a horse for only one year, then to work with another horse for the next season. He enters pleasure, go as you please and trail classes.

Although he no longer boards animals or gives riding lessons, Nixon is always happy to lend a helping hand to young riders.

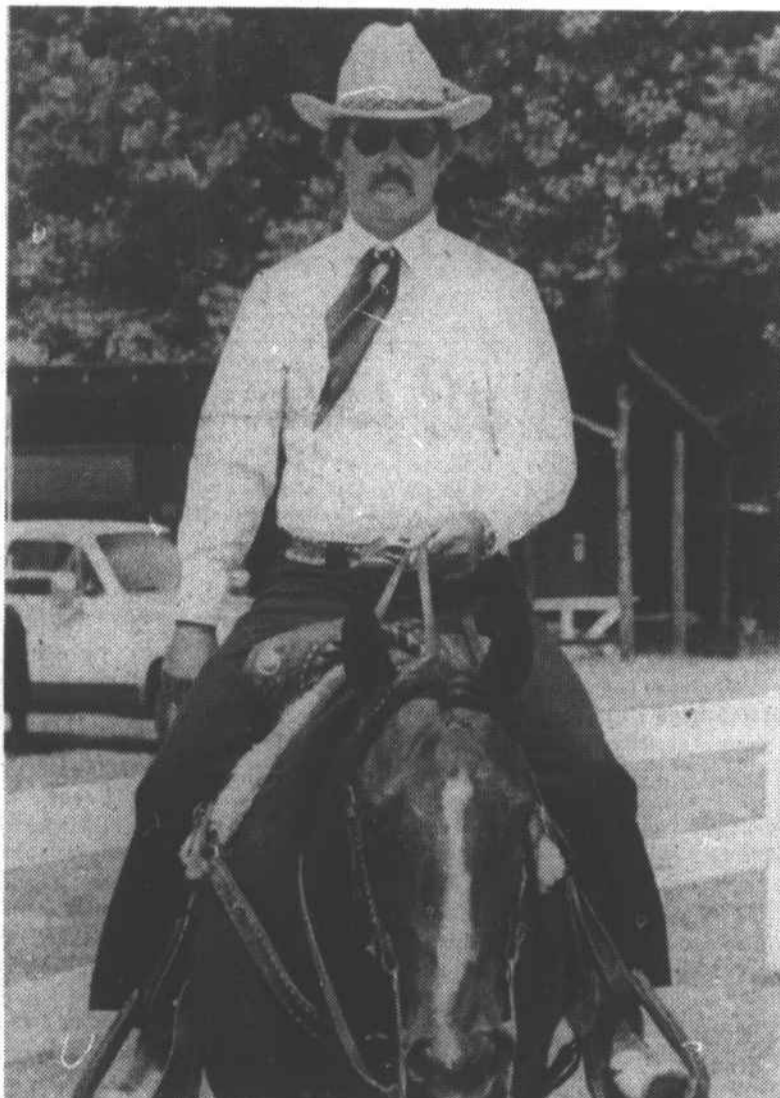
He and son-in-law Ray Winslow, who also rides pleasure horses for show, train and care for Nixon's 35-40 horses now on his farm.

Nixon smiles as he recalls that out of eight horses in one class at the Hertford Saddle Club show last Saturday, he bred six. He said he'd sold horses to people from as far away as Canada and New Mexico.

A somewhat younger rider than Nixon is Dena Jo White, daughter of Joe and Mary White, who in her first year of riding her horse in shows has racked up six trophies and 30-some ribbons.

"I ride in any class I can," said the seven-year-old equestrian who has ridden at the two rings in the county as well as in Plymouth and Suffolk in the novice go as you please and western pleasure classes.

Observers who know the horse



1982-83 school calendar

The Perquimans County Board of Education has released the 1982-83 school calendar which is outlined below.

- August 25 — students report.
- September 6 — Labor Day holiday.
- November 11 — Veteran's Day holiday; teachers report.
- November 25-26 — Thanksgiving holidays.
- December 21 — Christmas holidays begin at the close of school.
- December 22-31 — Christmas and New Year's holidays and vacation.
- January 3 — School resumes after holidays.
- April 4-8 — Easter holiday and vacation.
- June 3 — Last day of school.

Ouchless.



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show business say Dena Jo is a competitor to be reckoned with.

Dena's brother Chad White also rides in competition, although he and horse Pat Cody Cee haven't shown much this year. Chad has placed four times in only two shows and is the secretary of the newly-organized 4-H Horse Club.

A little older than Dena and Chad is Nicky Nixon, 15, who was raised around his grandfather Preston Nixon's horses, stopped riding for a few years, and has been back in the show saddle for about three months.

"I love it," Nicky said. "It's fun to

ride," added the president of the 4-H Horse Club.

Harrell Thach, a veteran rider, and his wife Ann own nine horses which they show all over, Harrell having ridden as far away as Pennsylvania and South Carolina.

Harrell is the leader of the 4-H Horse Club, teaches riding lessons and trains and shows horses for other people.

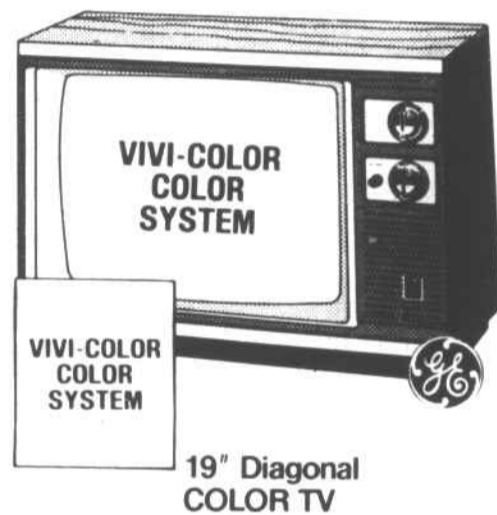
The youngest member of the Thach family, Lee, at age 15 months already loves to ride with his parents. "He's going to be a fine horseman," Thach said.

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