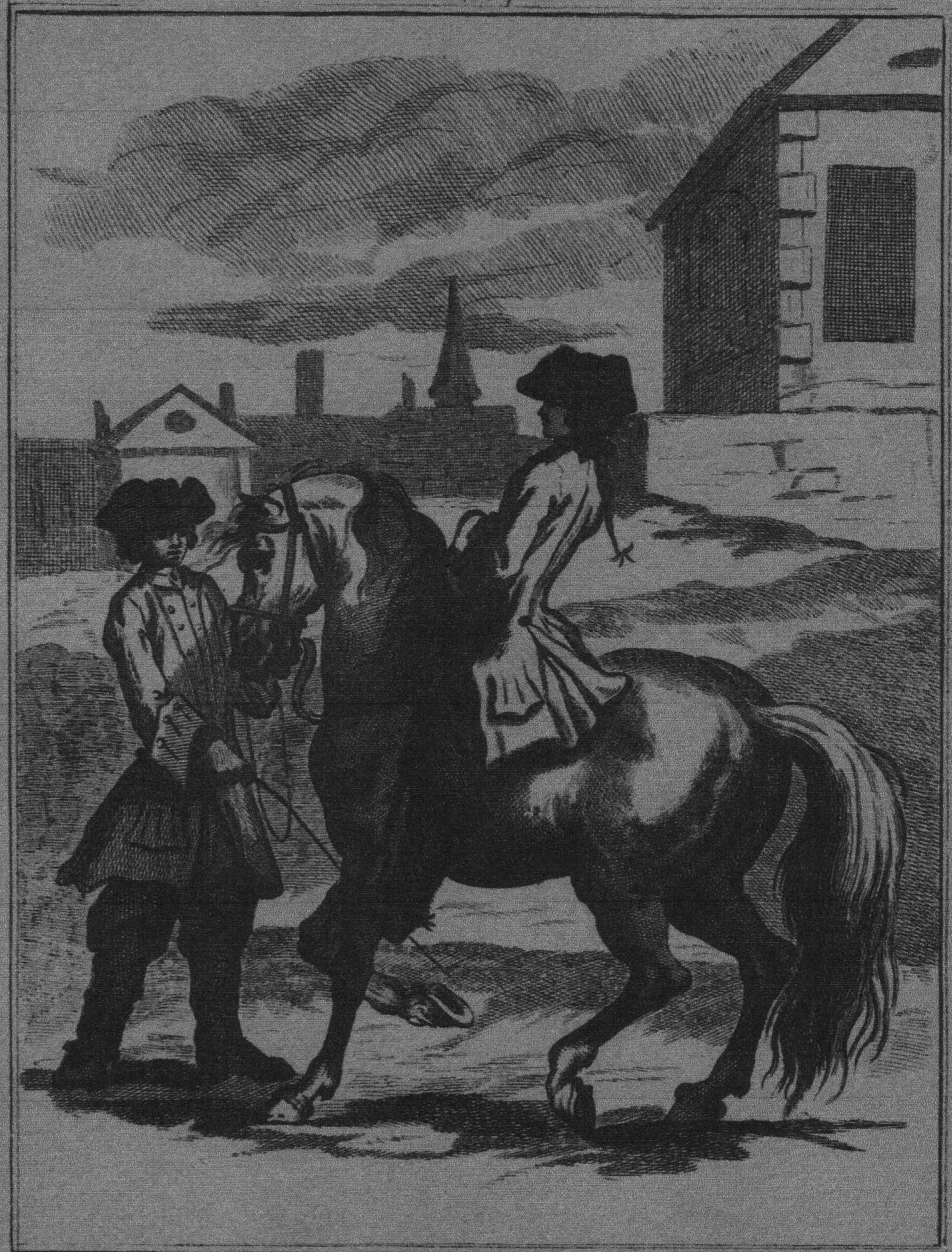


# DRESSAGE

THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE

(19)



*J. Vanderhaeck del. J. Simpson sc.*  
*The Horse learning to back the Master assisting with his rod on his knees and gently touching his bit.*

# BEGINNERS

## DRESSAGE FOR

# 6

by Kay Meredith

### CONFORMATION VERSUS CAPABILITY

At this time of year, when the weather can be depended upon to be erratic and many of you do not have access to indoor riding facilities, it is a good time to ponder other things. **Be sure** you continue your exercises on the blocks and ride as much as possible, working on the projects I've laid out for you in the previous articles.

If someone asked me to run a four-minute mile, I'd tell them they'd be lucky to get one in an hour, much less four minutes. It would just take more movement than I would be capable of producing.

Many times riders expect horses to perform work that they are not physically capable of producing. So you must learn to look at horses objectively and evaluate what you see. What I mean here is learning to look at your horse, see where his strengths and weaknesses lie, and plan a program of improvement which will get you the most for your effort. If you try to take a horse beyond his capabilities, you run the danger of encountering some problems such as:

A. lameness, due to the physical structure being asked to carry more than the load limit will allow,

B. violent resistance for the same reason,

C. refusal to work at all for the same reason.

Following are some pictures of conformation with accompanying explanations. Remember, these are **not** isolated cases, but rather fairly common sights in the show ring. Since none of us (people or horses) have perfect conformation, learn to evaluate the conformation of your horse and deal with it in a reasonable manner.



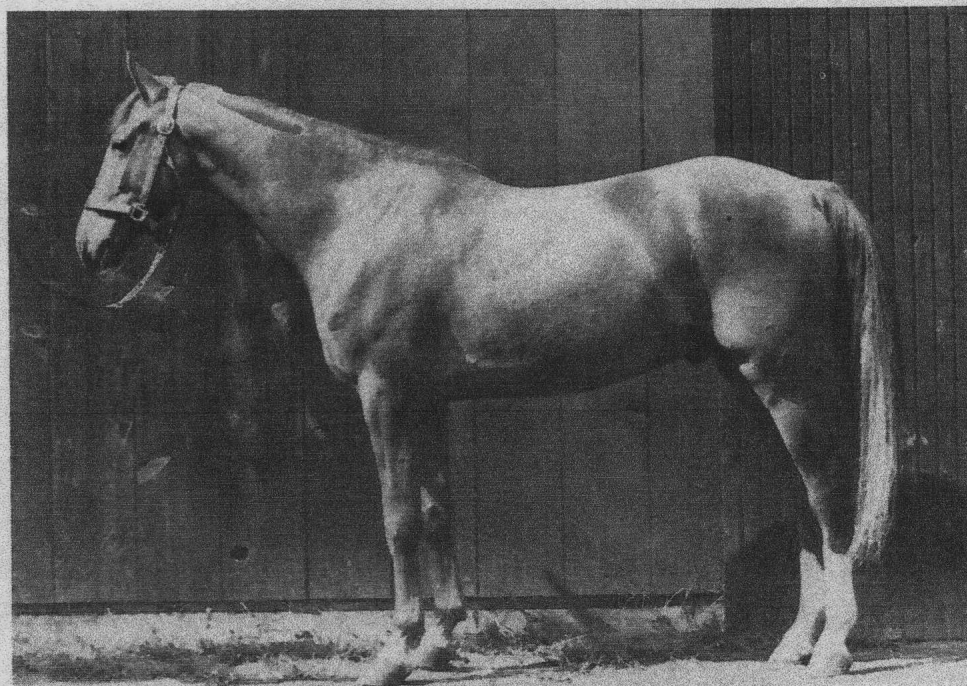
Straight pasterns — which means that the ability of the horse to absorb concussion is very limited. A horse with this problem will not usually have a very brilliant movement because:

A. it is uncomfortable to try to move long when he is built short;

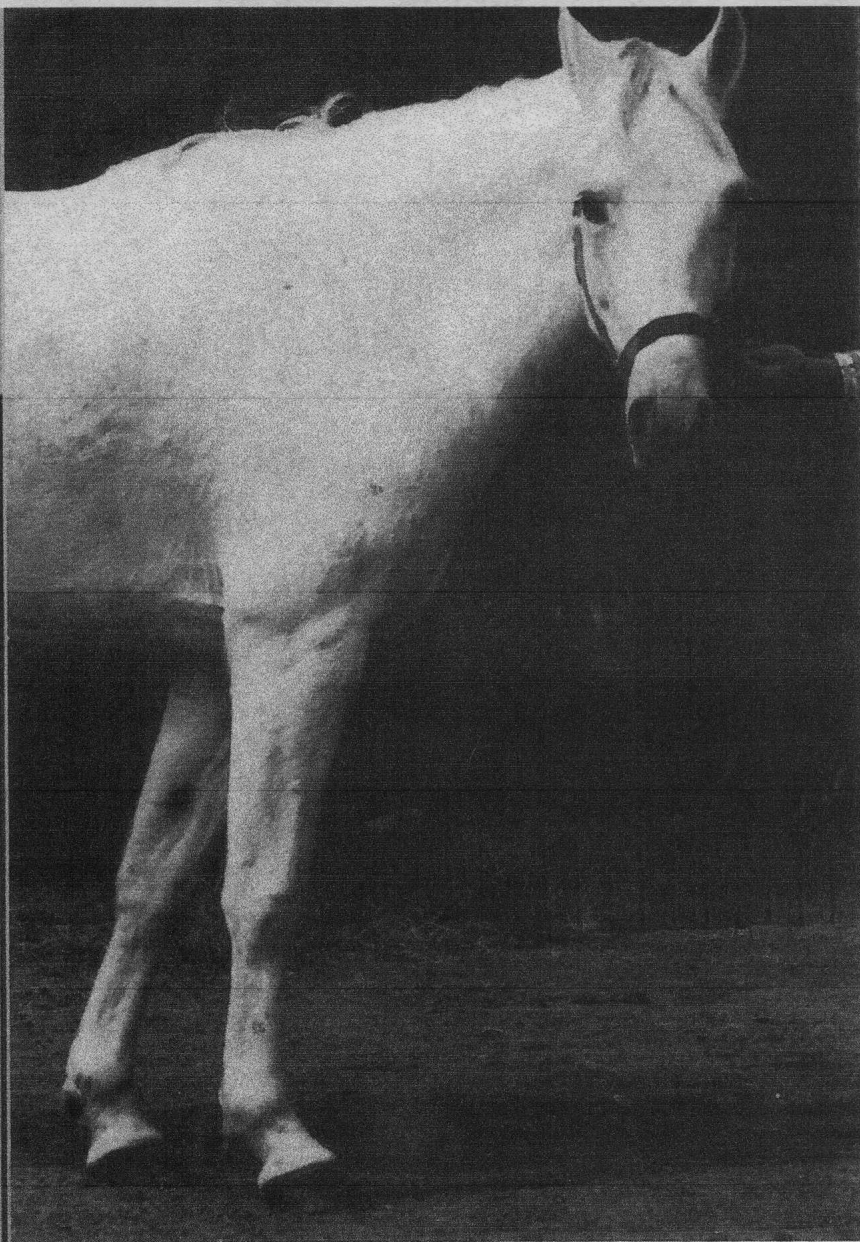
B. it is impossible since the framework (skeleton) of the horse was not built to lengthen;

C. it is generally accompanied by short, steep shoulders which also inhibit movement.

Ironically, the owner of these short, steep pasterns is a 16.2 hand horse with the aforementioned straight shoulders and relatively long back. He is very amiable and we have used a program of improvement which has caused him to move as well as any horse with these problems can. Brilliant trot work and a good canter are not possible — however obedience and accuracy are possible.



Here is another 16.2 hand horse. This one has a nice sloping shoulder and pastern which makes good trot work, both forward and lateral, very possible. **However**, due to the long back and loin, accompanied by a short croup, it is difficult for this horse to canter well. Trying to force him to engage his haunches more than he can comfortably in canter will only make him stiff and resistant. A score of 5 on his canter work should make the rider happy, while his trot work scores can go much higher.



This horse was born with a really straight shoulder, with the front legs set too far under. This makes anything more than a pleasure jog impossible and asking the horse for more will undoubtedly cause lameness. Hopefully, a horse with an extreme physical problem such as this will have a quiet, amiable disposition. He will make an excellent pleasure horse for someone who does not want to ride hard. There is usually a place for every individual in the horse world and this one in no exception. As long as he is kept in a program designed to encompass his physical limitations, he will be as valuable to the right owner (and more comfortable) than the most brilliant dressage horse going.

#### READERS PLEASE NOTE

In the November issue, a section was inadvertently left out of Mrs. Meredith's column. At the bottom of page 137, the text should continue as follows:

"... serpentine, etc.. It's time now to do some work on straight lines.

The first exercise in this program is to work at walk, trot and canter transitions approximately five feet from the track. The reason for this is that the horse tends to use the wall (even if it's only 10" high) for support. If you don't believe this, try riding five feet from the wall and see how hard your outside leg has to work to keep the horse from getting back close to the track.

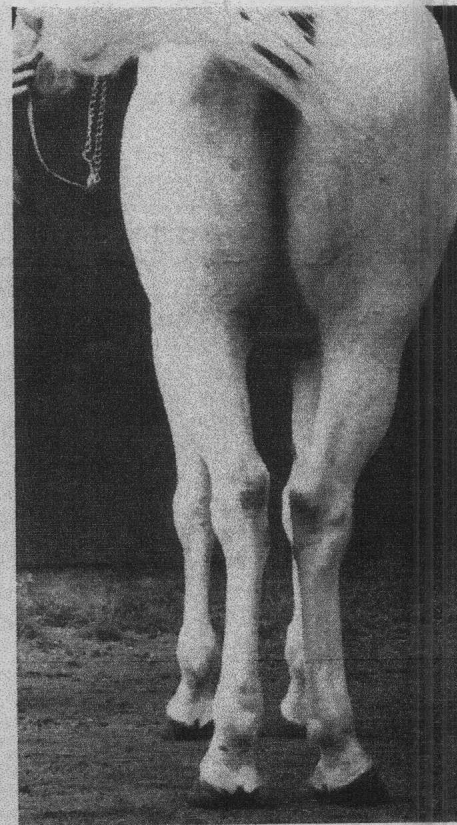
The next exercise is..."

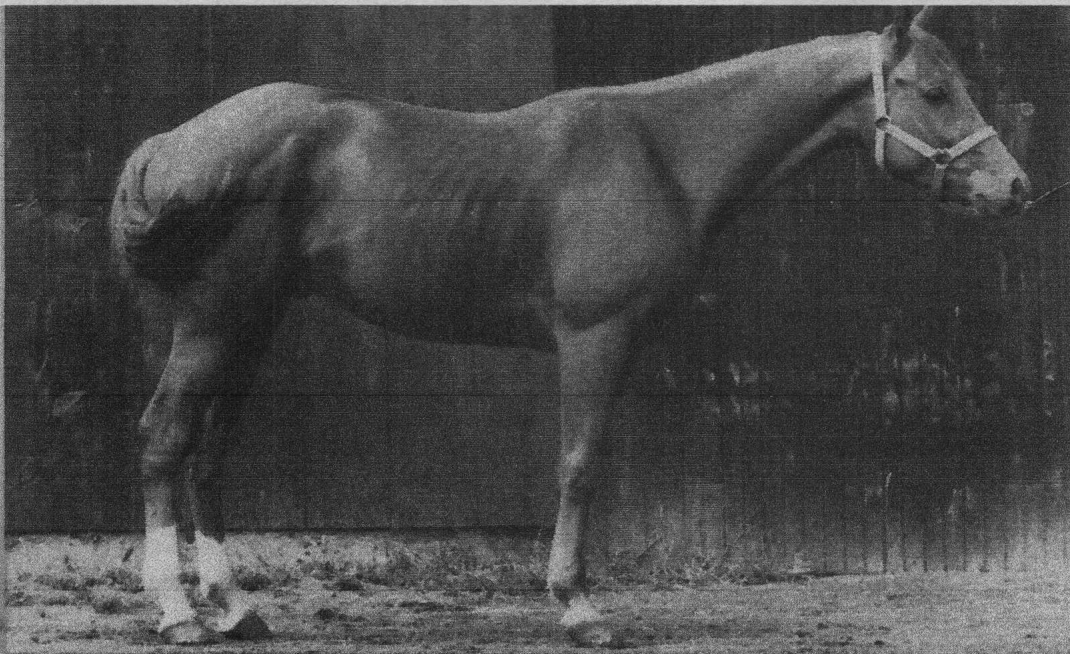
Two examples of leg problems: crooked front and hind legs. Interference is the danger here and when you are confronted with these problems, you must:

- A. see how much they can be helped by corrective shoeing;
- B. use protective boots over the horse's heels and fetlocks to minimize damage. However, in severe interference cases, the horse still hits hard enough to cause enlargements, so always check under the boots to make sure no permanent damage is being done;
- C. experiment and see what the horse is capable of without interfering. In some cases, as long as the horse is not asked to do lateral work there is no interference. When you do introduce lateral work, be careful and make sure the horse's legs are well protected;
- D. fatigue many times causes interfering (even in horses with straight legs) so don't plan long work sessions.

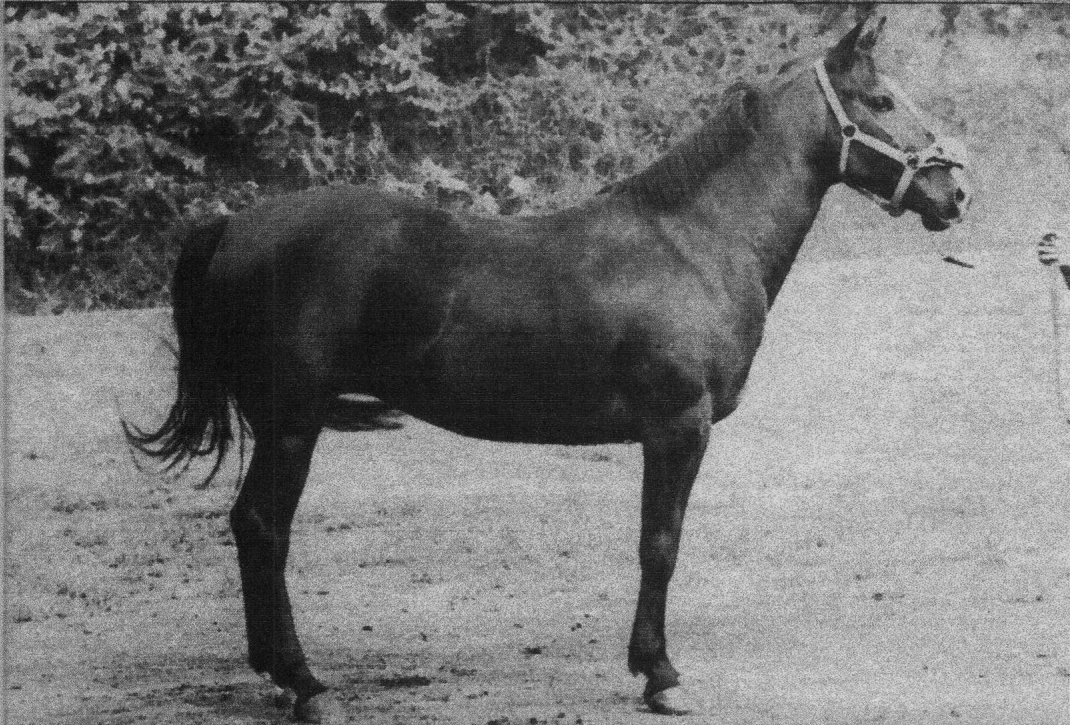
### HELP!

Eight-year old Thoroughbred with papers rescued from starvation by Englishwoman August 18, freefeeding since. Now healthy and for sale. Bay, 15½ hands, old wirecut off fore coronet band is ugly but does not bother him. Raced one season in Mexico, then neglected. \$450 (my expenditures) to one unconcerned with his ignorance and unafraid of natural extension and impulsion. Shirley Blanchard (213) 627-9751 and/or Ms. Thompson 341-6863.

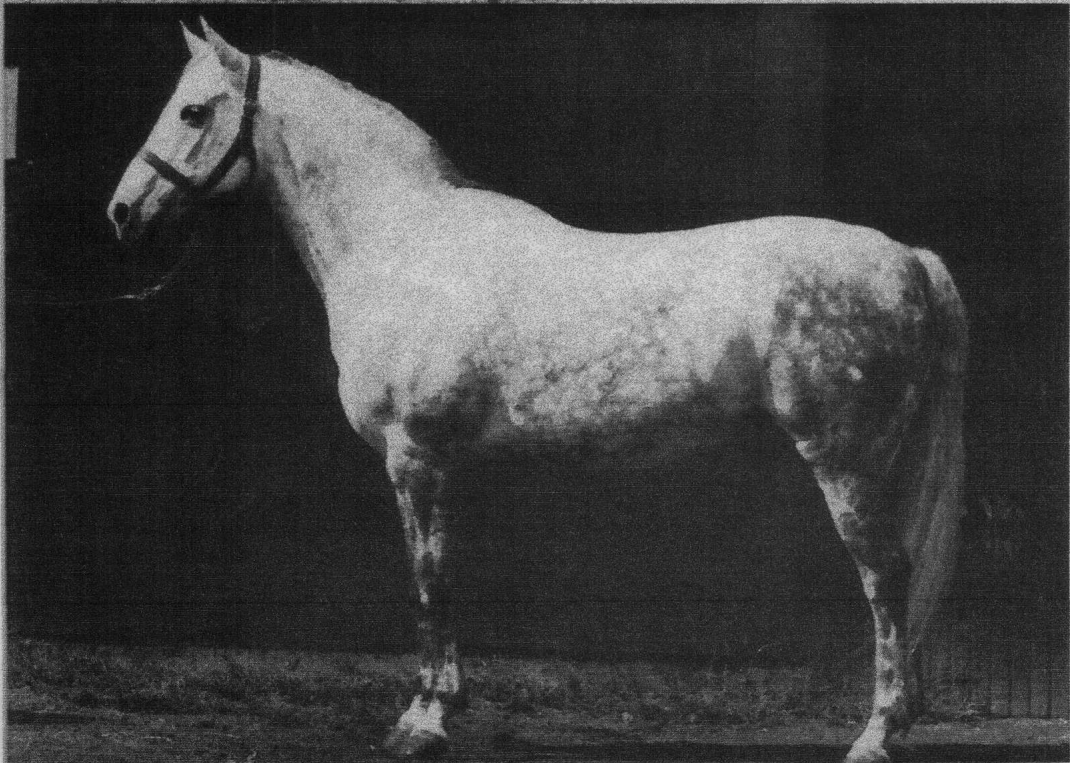




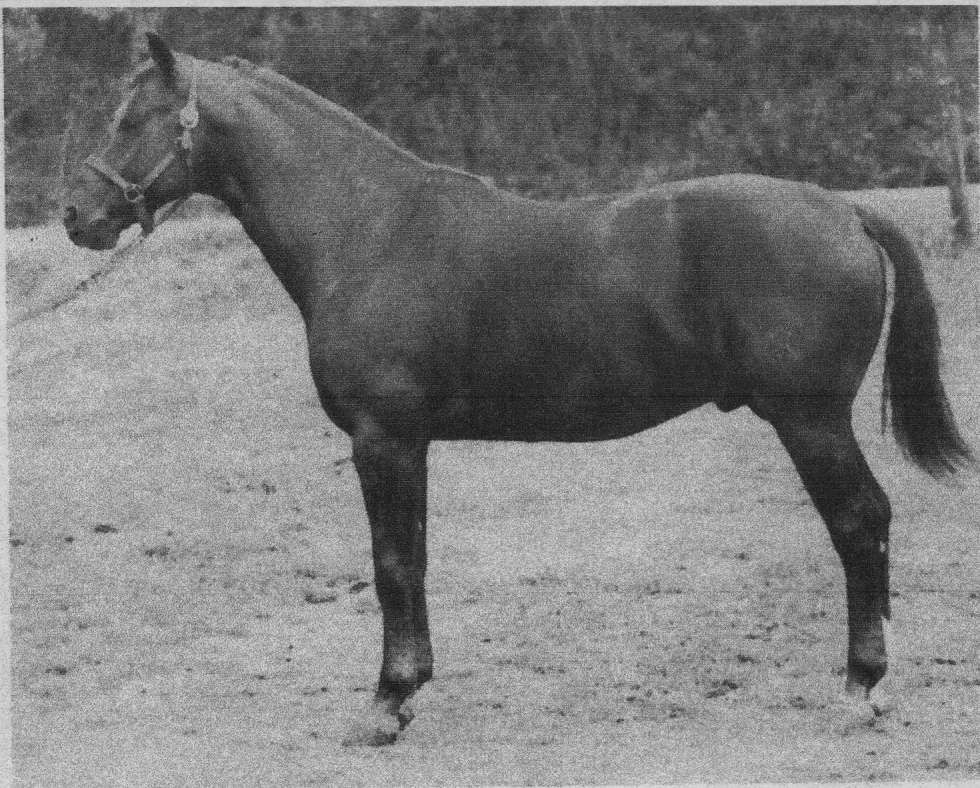
A relatively nice horse overall: nice slope to shoulders and pasterns, long neck, nice head. **But**, even when this horse gains weight, he will lack substance. That means that the program must be designed so as not to ask the horse to work too hard, causing resistance and lameness. His anatomy is constructed so that a good walk, trot and canter will be easy; engagement of the haunches and lateral work should all be possible. But the work sessions must not be too long (especially when he is young) since the whole structure (skeleton) is simply not very big. This is a common sight (lack of substance) and hopefully a reasonable early program will increase the level to which he can go and length of time he will be serviceable. Good conformation with lack of substance can best be handled by planning a program of training that doesn't require that the horse work too hard at an early age. With this in mind, a horse of this nature should give years of satisfaction.



A nice little horse, but one who is just too short all over (neck and legs in particular) to go successfully to a very high level. Use a program of dressage training to improve her, but dressage competition will not be her strong suit. Once again, the usefulness of this animal would probably be greatest in pleasure and trail riding.



A nice looking horse whose brilliance in trot work is hindered by short legs in comparison to his length. He is, in effect, a tall horse with short legs. In addition to making brilliant trot work impossible, it is difficult for him to engage the haunches in canter (collected pirouettes, etc.). Obedience and accuracy can be expected to come easily, but the competition nowadays also demands brilliance. Lateral work is also easy for this horse. His tremendous musculing enables him to do more than most horses with this type of frame (skeleton) but even this will not make extensions and collection easy for him.



Here we see a horse with a frame (skeleton) with enough substance to perform hard work, and shaped properly to extend and collect. Good sloping shoulders and pasterns (the concussion-absorbing devices); the horse is well-balanced: length of neck, back, croup and legs all in proportion. By nature, this horse was endowed with a physique able to perform high level work as long as the program of training is reasonable (meaning, take time to train a horse like this rather than bow to the human instinct to hurry when it looks like the horse can do it).

I have not covered all the possibilities by any means. Rather, I have tried to establish a method of thought for you to use so that your training program will be designed according to the physical needs of your horse. Remember, your responsibility to your horse is to be able to strengthen his best possibilities and enhance his weaker ones.

Our next project will be to evaluate the mental capabilities of your horse and, putting that together with the physical capabilities, design the complete program.

Kay-denza of the month: "Saying something complicated doesn't impress me — saying something understandable does."



#### QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What is wrong with this transition and how can the rider correct it?

## AMERICAN TRAKEHNER ASSOCIATION, INC.

### COLUMBUS, OHIO

The newly incorporated American Trakehner Association, Inc. completed its organization in Columbus, Ohio on Sunday, September 22, 1974 with the election of Waldemar Seunig of Munich, Germany as the corporation's first Distinguished Member. Colonel Seunig, internationally known rider, Olympic competitor, teacher and writer, is perhaps best known in the Western Hemisphere for his book **Horsemanship**, regarded by many as a classic among the works on the schooling and riding of horses.

The American Trakehner Association, Inc., an Ohio non-profit corporation, has been formed to promote the horse of Trakehner origin in the Western Hemisphere. It will maintain a public registry of Trakehner horses, mark or brand approved stallions, mares and foals with the Association's corporate seal, disseminate information to breeders, owners and friends pertaining to the breeding and raising of Trakehner horses, and promote the performance of the Trakehner horse in dressage, three-day event and hunting and jumping.

The breed originated in Trakehnen, East Prussia over 240 years ago with the blending of indigenous Prussian horses, the Thoroughbred and the Arabian. While the breeding goals of the Trakehner have changed over the years to meet the needs of the times, in more recent years the emphasis has been

on the development of a large, but nevertheless light cavalry horse, with the size of a Thoroughbred, but larger in bone and still possessing the elegance of the Arabian. With this breeding they are ideally suited for a sports horse to be used in hunting, jumping, three-day eventing and dressage. Indeed, the Trakehner scored well in the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany. Trakehners won both the Gold and Silver medals in the Grand Prix de Dressage. The individual Gold medal was won for the Germans by a Swedish-bred Trakehner stallion, Piaff, ridden by Liselott Linsenhoff, and the Silver medal was won for the Russians by the Trakehner stallion Pepel, ridden by Dr. Yelena Petushkova.

The Trakehner breed suffered the hardships of World War II and only relatively few horses came out of Prussia to West Germany where the breeding of the animal was initiated again with great success by the West German Verband, the German registry for horses of Trakehner origin. More recently, in 1957, the first significant importation of Trakehners into North America occurred when Gerda Friedrichs of Keswick, Ontario, Canada brought four stallions and twelve mares to Canada. Although there are relatively few Trakehners in North America, many can be traced to the bloodlines established on this Continent by the horses imported by Miss Friedrichs into Canada in 1957. Miss Friedrichs' contribution to the establishment of the breed in North America

led the members of the American Trakehner Association, Inc., to elect her as the second Distinguished Member of the Association at its first meeting on September 22, 1974.

More recently, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel S. Gafford of Petersburg, Virginia, have taken a strong interest in the breed. They initially acquired a number of horses from Miss Friedrichs, have since imported Trakehners from West Germany and have been actively breeding the horse in Virginia. A number of other Americans and Canadians have imported horses of Trakehner origin from the European Continent in recent years bringing the total number of horses in North America to something less than 300 head.

The officers of the newly formed corporation are: Leo H. Whitney, Norman, Oklahoma, President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Jim B. Rabon, Salisbury, North Carolina, Vice President; David L. Gribbons, Brentwood, New York, Secretary; and Terry L. Williams, Middleport, New York, Treasurer. The trustees also include Max von Bleucher, Long Lake, Minnesota; Jean Brinkman, Jacksonville, Florida; Fritz O. Daemen van Buren, Heath, Massachusetts; Nancy N. Griffin, Columbus, Ohio; Juergen Moslener, Columbus, Ohio; Jacque Roberts, Lexington, Kentucky; Martin W. Scheurlen, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; Gerhard Schickedanz, Unionville, Ontario, Canada; and Henry Schurink, Shaftsbury, Vermont.