

January 21, 2005

Hello, West Coast Active Riders!

Happy New Year to all our members and friends...here's to 2005 being THE year for all of us! For those of you who attended our **Hi-Ho Silver party**, held January 15th at the beautiful Hummingbird Nest Ranch, I can only say "wow"- does California know how to throw a party, or what?!

The idea for our costume bash, as you know, came from Mrs. Saperstein, and I was VERY skeptical. So early in the year...so chilly at night...I had all sorts of unsure thoughts about the **costume element** of our "Cowboys and Indians" party. But it was only a matter of hours after our e-invitations went out that the responses started pouring in: "Can I wear my home-made loincloth?" "Is someone already coming as Pocohontas?" "Is drag ok?" (Of course, "yes" was the answer to all three.....)

In the end, the costumes were terrific, the party was tons of fun, and, well, it just doesn't get a whole lot prettier than Hummingbird Nest Ranch. Luckily, many of our members brought cameras to capture the spirit of the event (and for future bribing leverage, I'm sure!), but my mom got most of you on camera anyway! So..... you can run from our lens, but you can't hide...(Mark Bone, I'm talking to you!)...Expect to see yourself immortalized in our **WCAR 2004-2005 flashback documentary premiering in March** at our Indio dinner!

And by the way, did I mention our costume winners? **Mark Bone**, of course, was our winner in the hotly contested "**Best Chief**" division, and he accepted his awards together with our "**Best Squaw**" winners, **Tammy Chipko** and **Elaine Fresch**. Our WCAR "**Best Cowboy**" was the handsome and authentic **Mark Audenino**, and the award for "**Best Cowgirl**" went to the lovely **Kathy Ballantine**, dressed to kill in a sparkling gold number! Oh my!

On behalf of WCAR, I would like to thank the Saperstein family and the entire terrific team at Hummingbird Nest Ranch for a truly top-notch, super-duper fabulous party. We are touched by your generosity toward our organization, and grateful for everything you do for our sport!

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Hummingbird Nest Ranch was also the site of a great clinic, and many WCAR members were sighted there! **Eddie Macken**, current chef d'equipe of the Irish Olympic team, an Olympian himself, and the four time consecutive winner of the Hickstead Derby, was on hand at HNR to get us all in shape for Indio. And wow- **what a clinic!** I went with my young mare "Ophelia", and we had a great time! The flat work was fun and challenging, the gymnastics exercises were tremendously helpful, and the course work was great practice. Also, we got to school out on the gorgeous Grand Prix field and jump all the liverpools and go up and down the bank...it was really, really so much fun, and a fantastic education for riders and horses. Thank you Eddie! Thank you as well to Richard Padilla, for organizing another super event at a (oh gosh, see...here's where I need the word "awesome"...if only I hadn't made that New Year's resolution!!!) world-class facility.

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So...now that we're all pumped up for Indio, and making our big plans for 2005, guess what? It's time to start thinking about our **Spruce Meadows Team Qualifications**. That's right- Spruce is coming- and WCAR wants YOU on our Prix de Nations team! The Spruce Meadows Prix de Nations is **one of our favorite events**, and we always send great teams.

For those of you who are not familiar with our Spruce Meadows Prix de Nations program, you are SOOOO in for a treat! Spruce Meadows, in Calgary, Alberta, is an incredible competition facility, recently voted "**Best Horse Show in the World**" by international riders. Owned by the Southern

family, this show has progressed from a small national competition in a big grass field to a gorgeous spectacle of horses, riders and fans...With prize money in the millions, TV viewers in the millions, and seemingly millions of people in the stands every day, this is a competition experience **not to be missed**.

Canada has a great equestrian tradition, and **focusing on up-and-coming Junior and Amateur competitors** is one of the ways this tradition stays strong. The Spruce Meadows Prix de Nations, scheduled this year for July 6th, is a **Nations Cup event**, just like the one you see for the **Team competition in the Olympic Games**. Only in this Nations Cup, the competitors are not seasoned pros jumping giant fences, but Junior and Amateur riders jumping the heights over which they compete every week: **1.10 meters** (= Childrens/ AA), **1.20 meters** (= Jr./Am. Modified), **1.30 meters** (= Low Jr./AO) and **1.40 meters** (= High Jr./AO). Teams compete from all over Canada and the States, and **WCAR sends one team of four for each height division**, for a **total of four teams**.

Do you have what it takes to make our Spruce Team? If you think you do, or think you might...now's the time to **show us what you've got!** This year, our Trials are scheduled for the following shows:

- * Palm Classic Horse Show (March 23-March 27)
- * Oaks Blenheim Spring Classic I (March 30-April 3)
 - * Del Mar National Horse Show (May 3-8)
- * Showpark Ranch and Coast Tournament (May 10-May 15)

Each division will have four trial events, and each competitor may drop one of his or her scores (the "drop score"- we *love* the "drop score"!). At the end of the Ranch and Coast, the top four finishers for each height division will receive a \$1500 travel stipend, plus lots of kudos, attention, presents and gear....those teams will then represent WCAR in the Prix de Nations event at the Spruce Meadows North American show in July. This is such a fun event, and an absolutely invaluable experience for every competitor! Last year we had a great time, and celebrated the West Coast at a great party, too!

Applications will be available next week, both in the Horse Show office at Indio, and on our website, www.westcoastactiveriders.com.

Good luck to all!!!!

Yours,
Gaby Salick