



Walter Carroll and his granddaughter walk a three-year-old mare toward the barn for the night. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

## Why Hills girl is intrigued by world of equestrians

Four years ago 16-year-old Jill Decker of Farmington Hills was only mildly interested in horses.

"I started riding to make my mom happy and to please myself," the pretty, blond daughter of the Tom Deckers says.

But that changed quickly. Today, she would need a bushel basket to hold all of the blue and red ribbons she has won this year.

"Now, I ride to please myself. If you're going to stay in it, it has to be to please yourself."

Jill rides her Morgan horse, Donna, in Morgan all-breed equitation and park saddle competition. These are precision contests where the rider and horse perform as a team.

Jill is rated among the top ten in the country in four categories: children's park saddle, ladies' park saddle, amateur park saddle and saddle seat equitation.

Most of these championships were won at the national meet in Oklahoma City last summer. Jill competes as a driver, too, and won the national children's pleasure drive. Because all competition is formal, she wore an elegant long white dress while driving the two-wheel cart before the judges.

Morgans are a special breed of horse and all shows are Morgan all-breed shows.

Mrs. Decker, a former competitor and blue ribbon winner, says, "The Morgan doesn't fling its feet out as it runs, but runs with a tucking motion."

The Morgan differs from Arabian stock in body build—a little stockier and in the way it handles the feet. The Morgan doesn't fling its feet out as it runs, but runs with a tucking motion.

Jill's horse, Donna, a present from her grandfather, Walter Carroll of Farmington, is a dark chestnut, 15 hands high, 16 years old.

In equitation, judging is based on the way horse and rider move together, the rider's position on the horse and the handling during performance.

In NATIONAL competition, horse and rider are tested individually. The judge is given a card listing the items of a prepared one minute performance. The judge may request some or all of these.

Jill gives an example. One judge recently told her, "drop reins." This means to take feet out of the straps. However, it is expected there will be no change in rider's position or handling of the horse.

Jill rides English saddle and in daytime competition is dressed in a blue outfit with gold velvet trim which her mother made. In evening competition, formal wear is expected and she wears a tuxedo style coat and pants, white ruffle shirt, black tie and top hat.

Still, being a national champ is not all blue velvet and white shirt work.

She says, "My grandfather purchased Donna for me. In return, I take care of his horses."

During the summer, this amounts to an average of 30 hours a week. When in school, she manages three hours a day and more on weekends.

"I feed, exercise and groom them, take care of their feet properly, clean the stalls and tackroom. You also have to keep a constant watch on the horses to be sure they have the right diet and vitamins."

There are nine horses on the Carroll farm with two foals on the way.

It takes only a minute or two for Jill and her mother to get Donna ready to ride. Jill brings her from the stall. Mrs. Decker has the bride ready. Jill puts the saddle on, her



This team won another championship at the Michigan fairgrounds last weekend when they competed against some of the best young riders in the state.

## Degrees awarded OU students

Thirteen Farmington students at Oakland University qualified for graduate and undergraduate degrees at the end of the fall session.

They were: Connie Abramson, M.A. in counseling and guidance; Elizabeth Baillie, MAT in teacher-elementary education; Lucinda M. Boehm, MAT in teacher-reading; Sandra A. Dawson, M.A. in English; Katherine Dow, M.A. in counseling and guidance;

Jane W. Ely, MAT in teacher-elementary education; Jane K. Gutzler, MAT in early childhood training; Kevin L. Kerekhoff, B.A. in psychology; Mary C. Lindbert, M.A. in counseling and guidance; Bonnie L. Nagel, MAT in teacher-elementary education; Dale W. Sikerak, B.A. in psychology; Jean Tyler, MAT in teacher-elementary education; Mildred L. Whaley, MAT in teacher-elementary education.

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## Hospital classes held on nutrition

Botsford General Hospital is offering a series of nutrition and diet therapy classes for members of the Farmington community and surrounding area as part of its Community Education program.

There is no charge for the classes, directed by Botsford Hospital's staff of five registered therapeutic dietitians.

The next hour-long class will begin at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 11. The subject will be diabetes and includes a discussion and explicit information on diet foods, mixed dishes and eating out.

The meetings are held in the third floor dining room of the north building of the hospital, 28050 Grand River. Interested persons should call the hospital at 476-7500, extensions 337 or 358, between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. on the Monday prior to the date of the meeting.

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