

An Interview with Jutta Schott on the requirements for licensure from the German National Equestrian Federation

Jutta didn't start to ride until the age of 15. She was torn between learning to be a dancer and learning to be a rider. In Germany at the time, one had to have a partner and a ballroom studio in which to dance. Since Jutta lacked both, she decided to learn to ride, instead. No one in her family was interested in horses but they supported her choice.

What she discovered was that riding and dancing were "so closely related, it's just incredible. Dancing with a partner with two feet is just about the same as dancing with a partner who has four. As a rider, we should strive for 'compassionate leadership'". She went on: "some leaders you love to follow because what they are asking makes sense---and some you do not. Horses are the same---they would like to have a leader they'd like to follow."

At 21, after riding for 6 years, Jutta decided to go for her Bereiter's certificate. Before applying, one had to serve a minimum three year apprenticeship at an approved riding facility, under the supervision of an accredited riding instructor, licensed by the state. Such a stable also had to have well-schooled horses suitable for an apprentice to learn on. In Bavaria, Jutta found a stable near her home, and began the care and training of four horses the first year, six horses the second, and ten horses the third.

After completing her apprenticeship with a remarkable woman who had been the only woman to train horses for the German cavalry during WW II, and who organized a daring night time cross country rescue of a group of military horses during the Allied invasion, Jutta decided that she was ready for the Bereiter test.

It was 1970. "At that time, riding in Germany was very much a male-dominated profession. At our testing, there were forty men and only one other woman. We weren't separated from the men, who either chased you, made fun of you, or put you down."

Requirements for the Bereiter, as for the Reitlehrer FN, were much more stringent than they are today, according to Jutta.

For the Bereiter exam, whose emphasis was more on training horses than on training riders, one had to do the following:

Be able to train and teach successfully through second level; pass both oral and written exams; demonstrate an ability to teach a group of students; be able to lunge both a horse and a rider; do a line of gymnastic jumps; ride a full course of jumps one meter, 20 centimeters high; know a history of riding; have practical stable management skills; know equine first aid; have a basic knowledge of eventing, including rules and regulations and know how to prepare a horse for eventing. One also had to perform show jumping and present horses in hand. One was required to jump 80 centimeters without stirrups or a

bridle along a row of jumps in a jumping alley. The jumping alley had some solid obstacles, including a brick wall.

Jutta passed her Bereiter exam and went to work as a professional first in Germany and then in Austria.

After becoming a Bereiter, one had to work an additional five years before applying to take the Reitlehrer FN exam. This had to include at least 2 years of working with a licensed riding instructor. One also had to be at least 25 years old and had to have trained a horse previously up through 4th level. The test took place at Warendorf, Westphalia. When one applied to take the Reitlehrer FN test, one had to write an essay on some assigned topic. This essay was submitted along with one's application. One could choose whether one wished the assigned subject to be on eventing or on dressage.

It took four weeks of living at Warendorf full time to prep for the Reitlehrer FN exam. The school had 40 horses. Applicants did stalls, tack cleaning, grooming, etc., serving as a work crew for the Warendorf stables. Each applicant was assigned a school horse to use for the prep work and for the final exam.

At the time Jutta applied to take the Reitlehrer FN test, she was working for Arthur Kottas, the head of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, Austria, at his private barn. She took an unpaid vacation to prepare for the exam and stayed in a Warendorf hotel. (She continued to work for Kottas after passing her examination, staying with him until December, 1983.)

As part of the prep. work, Jutta had to ride a 4th level test in a double bridle; had to ride in a group taught by another student; teach a group lesson herself; teach an individual lesson; and prepare a course for jumping. When jumping, she rode an assigned horse over both verticals and double oxers with one combination after another. At times, the fences were in an S curve rather than in a row. Once a week, she rode a full course.

Mornings were spent teaching, jumping, and riding dressage. Afternoons were spent learning the history of horse breeds, diseases, and stable management. She had to give a lecture on a topic of her choice.

Each applicant was required to do in hand work with the stallions from the Warendorf breeding barn. Jutta was the only woman among 40 men during this testing period. The men were not supportive, trying to undermine her until the day not one of them could make a difficult stallion do piaffe in hand. When it came time for Jutta to try, the instructor mocked her, assuming she would fail. When she alone succeeded, it was a turning point. The men came to respect her and began to help her out, especially with the jumping, which she did not care for.

She had been assigned a horse known to stop at the 2nd jump of combinations. The jumps were high---over five feet. One day, Jutta had to go from taking a set of oral exams straight to riding a jumping test on this horse. One man had the horse ready for her at the

round pen, but stopped her before she got on and handed her a brandy schnapps. She rode the course, which had the maximum number of jumps at the maximum height (five feet or more) and included two triples, two doubles, and several verticals. She downed the schnapps, passed the test, and decided she would never jump again!

The Reitlehrer FN test consisted of two parts. The first part was 2 days of testing, with one day of orals and one day of all practical material, including jumping, teaching group and individual lessons, lunging a horse and a rider, and doing in hand work.

An applicant had to pass the first part of the test before going on to take the second part, which was all theoretical. One could take up to a year before returning to take the second part of the test. The theoretical part also required intensive study, as it went over budgeting, financial planning, equine law, laws for apprentice guardianship, health care, 1st aid, and personal, business and equine insurance. Overall, there were about 40 pieces to the whole certification process. Applicants went in as a 2 member team to answer questions.

Applicants for the Reitlehrer FN testing came from all equine disciplines: racing, breeding, eventing, jumping and dressage. Once one finished both parts of the testing, one was told if one passed or not. With the Reitlehrer FN certification, an individual was approved to teach apprentices as well as to train horses and riders through the upper levels. Jutta passed her exam in 1981.

Jutta came to California in 1983 to work for a family who raised and showed Trakehners. She had a successful show career with their horses and began to give clinics at the request of people who had seen her ride. She met a former BSEA member, Dan Speer, at a California clinic and he asked her to come to Montana to give a clinic in Billings. The rest, as they say, is history. Jutta also gives regular clinics in Oregon, Sacramento, Las Vegas and Colorado, as well training and teaching out of Shadowridge Equestrian Center in Highland, CA.