



# CLIPPITY CLIPS

## Got a horse crazy kid?

BY KAREN DALLIMORE

I want a pony." If my mother had a dollar for every time she heard that...Eventually she just gave up and bought one for me, but she could have simply sent me to summer horse camp. There are lots of horse camps around, but which one do you choose?

Have a good look around the stable when you check out potential summer horse camps. There may be a little mud and a few flies, but is the barnyard tidy? Are the fences and stable in good repair? Are the horses and ponies well kept? Does the instructor inspire confidence?

Greg Gilbert runs Golden Woods Riding School in Rockwood. He suggests that parents look for a school that is approved by the Association of Riding Establishments of Ontario (ARE-Ont). This designation shows that the stable has met annual inspection standards for horse care, stable management and business practices such as liability insurance. Greg says that all horses must be six years of age or older, and instructors must have at least five years of teaching experience to meet ARE-Ont standards.

What age should your child be in order to get the most out of a horse camp? Golden Woods will accept students at six years of age, but Greg finds that the younger children are often too small to get much out of the experience. "It's basically a pony ride," he says. "Children between six and eight years of age are led on their pony in a controlled environment. Their legs are simply not long enough to even reach the edge of the saddle." The camp at Golden Woods will take kids up to 13 years of age.

What can your child expect? Your child will spend his time riding, learning general horsemanship and playing games on horseback. (I'm curious: How do you get the horse to play in musical chairs and hot potato races?) Your child will also make new friends. Your horse-crazy child will have to show up with lunch - please no mayo or peanuts, a change of clothes and boots with a half-inch heel. Helmets are required by law, so ask if they are available at the farm. If you prefer to equip your young rider with his or her own helmet, you are looking at an investment of about \$60. Hockey and bicycle helmets won't do. The cost for the five-day program at Golden Woods is \$250.

Safety is priority number one, with fun being a close second. "We hope to build their confidence around a horse," says Greg. Your child will come home with an ear-to-ear grin and smelling like a stable. You will learn why your child's pony is called a pinto and why horses eat hay.

Sounds like heaven to me. I remember wearing my riding boots

to bed. I gave that up but not the horses. My mother ended up keeping my pony for 25 years: She

fuelled a passion that will last a lifetime.

### Riders compete in Open Novice

BY KAREN DALLIMORE

Many accomplished young riders recently competed in the Open Novice Dressage Schooling Show at the Golden Woods Riding School in Rockwood. Cassandra Wiesner of Milton and her pony Bengad Precocious (left) placed second in training level test one. During the warm-up beforehand, Bengad Precocious, also known as Spunky Pumpkin, bucked his 10-year-old-rider off. Cassandra rode well despite the grass stains on the knees of her breeches. Sarah Filby of Rockwood competed on pony Fiery Knight.



### Western Riding Camp for ages 9 to 14

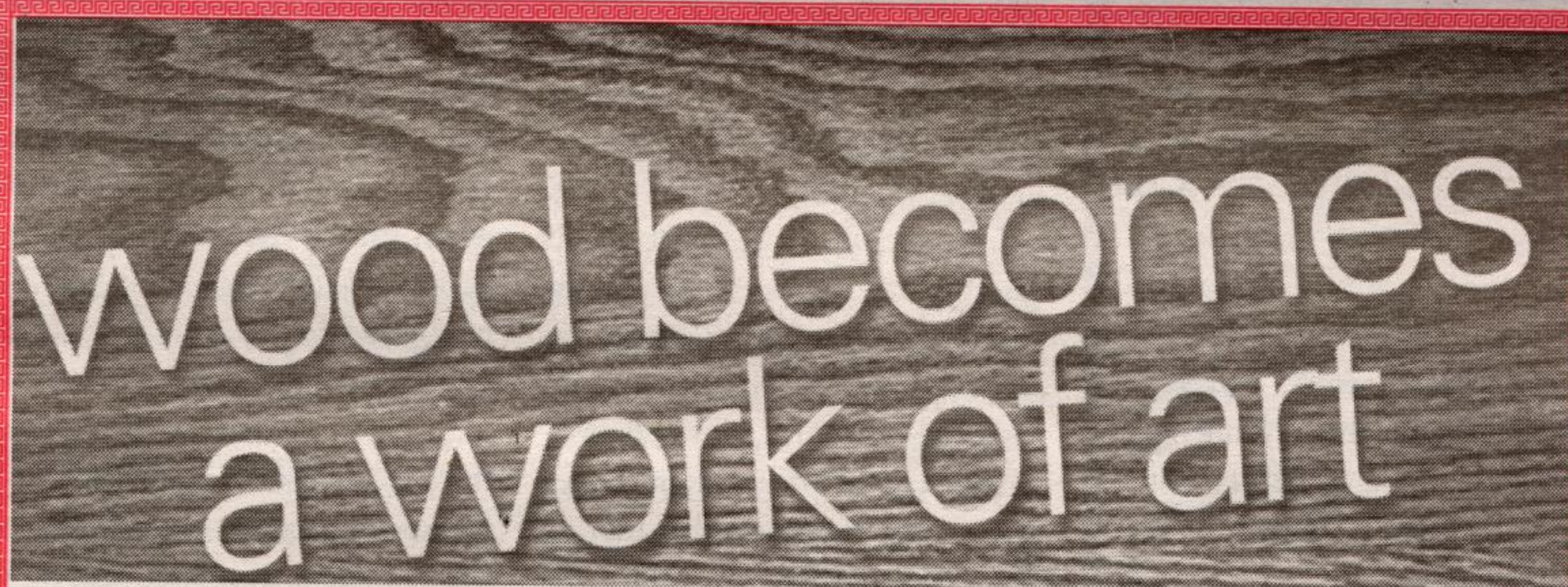
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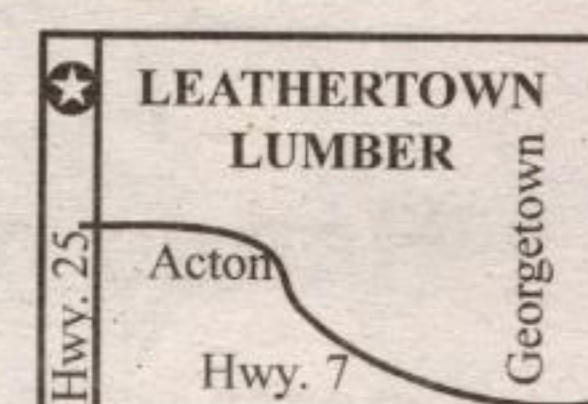
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