

SPORTS

Pracht fifth at dressage team trials

Martina Pracht was good, but not good enough, at the Selection Trials for the Canadian Dressage Team held at the York Equestrian Centre last week.

The Cedar Valley resident combined with her 13-year-old chestnut Hessen stallion, Amaloper, to finish fifth out of seven rider/horse units at the trials, which were held Wednesday and Sunday.

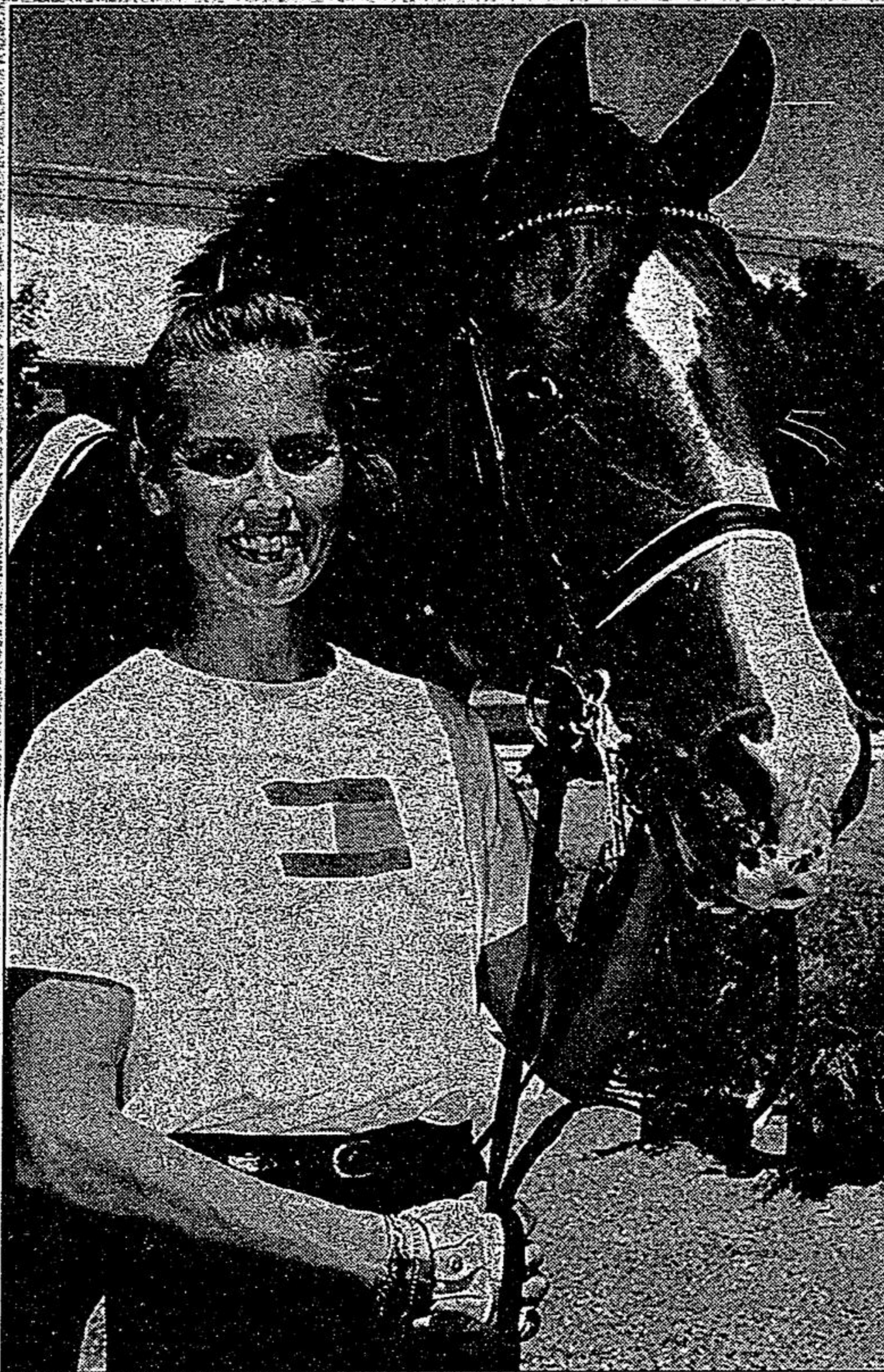
Pracht scored 878 points in Wednesday's first trial, finishing Sunday with 898 points. Her total of 1,776 points was 128 short of Brampton's Nancy MacLachlan, who finished first both days.

Victoria Winter of Oakville was second overall with 1,881 points; Brockville's Liz Steacie was third with 1,832 points; Evi Strasser of Ste. Adele Que. was fourth with 1,807 points.

The trial was one of two being held to determine the four horse and rider teams that will make up the Canadian Dressage Team at the World Equestrian Games to be held in Rome, Italy this fall.

The same judges will travel to Leverkusen, Germany this week to judge the other four top candidates for the Canadian team.

Pracht's past dressage successes include gold medal finishes at the 1996 Eastern Division Canadian National Championships and Canadian National Championships, giving her Canadian National Grand Prix honours. She made an impressive debut in 1987 when she won team gold and individual silver at the Pan American Games. She was the alternate rider with the Canadian Olympic Dressage Team in 1992, and competed in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. She was also named Canadian Grand Prix champion in 1993.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Cedar Valley resident Martina Pracht along with her horse, Amaloper, finished fifth at the Canadian Dressage Team trials, which were held at the York Equestrian Centre last weekend.

Young athlete seeks assistance

Danielle Gnemmi qualifies for World Athletic Championships for the Physically Disabled.

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
CORRESPONDENT

Annie and Jurgen Czerwinski are hoping to drum up local support for their grand daughter as she travels to Birmingham, England, this week to compete in the World Athletic Championships for the Physically Disabled.

The Stouffville area couple are part of the team backing up Danielle Gnemmi, a 15-year-old Mississauga resident and frequent visitor to the Czerwinski farm.

The teen qualified for the world event by bringing home two gold medals and a silver from a national qualifying meet in Surrey, B.C. from July 7-12.

Gnemmi, who has cerebral palsy, is currently ranked second in the world in her class in shot put, 11th in the 100-metre sprint, and 12th in the 200m.

My dream is to represent Canada at the Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia in the year 2000," said Gnemmi.

The Czerwinkis feel the world championships, scheduled for Aug. 7-18, will help their grand daughter achieve her goal.

Getting international experience in England will go a long to helping her fulfill that dream," said Annie Czerwinski.

Czerwinski said there has already been support shown her granddaughter from friends she has met through the years in Stouffville.

She is asking businesses, service clubs and individuals to contact her at 640-3424 if they wish to offer financial support.

While the Cerebral Palsy Sports Association is funding part of the athlete's expenses, she must line up an additional \$2,500.

"I really appreciate the support in making my dream come true," said Gnemmi.

Gnemmi's mother, Eileen, lived in Stouffville in the mid 1980s.

Card-a-thon at York Equestrian Centre

They'll be riding for the disabled this Sunday in the Vivian Forest.

The annual Card-a-thon is to be held out of Cedar Valley's York Equestrian Centre, with

proceeds going to support the Canadian Association for Riding for the Disabled (CARD).

CARD provides therapeutic horseback riding for children

and adults with a variety of physical and cognitive disabilities.

All participants are to collect pledges for Sunday's ride, with riders tackling either a 25-kilo-

metre or 25-mile trail through the Vivian Forest. The event will result in the closure of Davis Drive between Kennedy Road and McCowan Road from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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