

## Business/Perspective

# The square dancing horses of Poway

## *Hoofing to a square dance*

Square dancing has been around for a long time, but Jeremy's Ranch English Riding School in Poway has put an exciting, original new face on an old pastime.

Recall the square dance of yesterday with costumed couples, rhythmic music and a seasoned caller announcing the dance moves. Now substitute horses and riders for the dancing couples, throw in several jumps and some creative new moves and you have an inkling of the fun and excitement of "The Dancing Horses of Poway."

In a peaceful valley just east of downtown Poway, eight particularly talented and cooperative horses (including Thoroughbreds, Welsh Ponies, an Arabian, a Quarter Horse and a Morgan) recently



**TROTting ALONG-** Eleven-year-old student Avery Ruonala leads her Welsh pony, Teddy, to dance practice at Jeremy's Ranch English Riding School. She is part of the horse and rider "Dancing Horses of Poway" square dance performance.

acted as dance partners for eight motivated riding students in a challenging and impressive square dance on horseback.

The dance included the dosidos, fans and sashays of traditional

square dancing choreographed to include all eight horses and riders jumping five jumps in various patterns, often with partners jumping the same jump simultaneously in opposite directions.

To add to the challenge, this square dance was performed in perfect time to music (Cock o' the North and Hundred Pipers) arranged and performed exclusively for Jeremy's Ranch by Peter McDonald.

The idea and choreography for "The Dancing Horses of Poway" are the brainchildren of Stephanie Kicinski, the owner of and instructor at Jeremy's Ranch.

When asked what generated this unique idea Stephanie said, "We are always looking for new challenges at the Ranch. We had done square dancing on horseback, jumping in patterns and quadrilles to music.

However, we had never seen or heard of anyone combining all of these elements into one performance, perhaps because it was so difficult to conceive and execute.

Perhaps what makes this feat most spectacular is the fact that these young riders take lessons only once a week and do not own their own horses. Their equine partners range in age from 8 to 26 years old and are lesson horses owned by the Ranch.

In addition to the horse and rider couples, 20 energetic students performed the traditional Gordon's dance around the dancing horses.

Costumes for the gala performance were designed and produced by Jackie Marrone, longtime Poway resident and horse lover.

Stephanie Kicinski, owner of Jeremy's Ranch, has been teaching English horseback riding to students from Poway, Rancho Bernardo, Rancho Penasquitos and Scripps Ranch since 1990.

Because the Ranch is located at Kicinski's private residence, interested parties are asked to visit by appointment only. You can contact Jeremy's Ranch at (858) 679-1168.