

Horses + travel = 'Equitrekking'



CHIP WARD

Ten years ago, Darley Newman had just graduated from St. Catherine's School. Now she has her own TV series.

St. Catherine's grad turns her passions into television show

BY DOUGLAS DURDEN
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

Darley Newman, St. Catherine's School Class of 1997, has launched her own TV show, "Equitrekking."

The six-part series, premiering locally at 6:30 p.m. tomorrow on WCVE, takes viewers on a unique travel experience — horseback riding across the globe. First up: Vermont.

We recently quizzed the 28-year-old Myrtle Beach, S.C., native about her project, which she both produces and hosts.

This sounds like a dream job — horseback riding and travel. How did you come up with the idea?

It is a dream job! In fact, it's

my dream job! That's how it all got started. I wanted to combine my passion for horses and travel, do those things I love on a daily basis, and "Equitrekking" just evolved naturally from there.

As a traveler, horses allow me

EQUITREKKING

When: 6:30 p.m.

Saturdays,
premiering
tomorrow

On: WCVE-TV

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to get to places that are often inaccessible by other means. I share each travel journey with a new equine friend.

It's a very, very special way to see the world and experience life.

Which came first — a love of horseback riding or working in TV?

I have always loved and been fascinated by horses. When I was just 7 years old, I started to ride at a camp in the mountains

See **NEWMAN**, Page **C5**

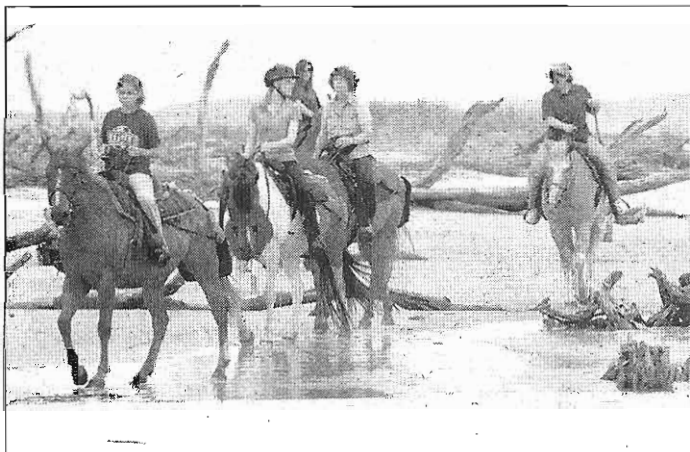


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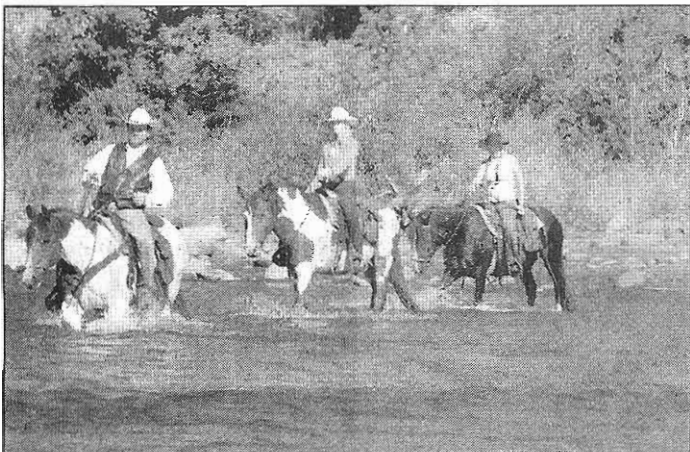
Darley Newman is living her dream — combining a travel show with her love of horses.



An upcoming episode of "Equitrekking" takes Newman to the Doñana National Park on the coast of Spain.



Closer to home, Newman goes trail riding with a group on Driftwood Beach on Jekyll Island, Ga.



Tuff Flaherty (from left), Newman and Tara Flaherty ride through Wyoming's Shoshone National Forest.

"When you are riding in a new place, your senses are heightened and you see things that you wouldn't have known were there."

DARLEY NEWMAN
Host, "Equitrekking"

Newman

From Page C1

of North Carolina. . . . In college, I had my first chance to combine horses with another passion, travel, during a riding vacation at the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina.

Riding on the same trails that George Vanderbilt's guests traveled during the Gilded Age was a special way to learn about the area's history, while doing something active with my mother, a fellow horse lover who hadn't ridden in years. I loved it.

My first TV job was for a local station in South Carolina as a cameraperson for a summer. I carried heavy equipment, set up lights and learned the basics of framing shots, all necessary skills in the TV world.

During college, I worked at the Talk Radio News Service and got a chance to cover White House briefings, Capitol Hill meetings and did live on-air reporting.

After graduation, I stayed in Washington, working at WBDC-TV and on a "Frontline" documentary for PBS. Then I took the plunge and went up to the Big Apple to work at "48 Hours" on CBS.

As a producer, what's your goal with "Equitrekking"?

The show's main goal is to take a more intimate look at each destination through horses and riding. Horses have such keen senses. They can tell you a lot about yourself when you are around them and provide a special window into a country and a culture's past.

When you are riding in a new place, your senses are heightened and you see things that you wouldn't have known were there. You talk to the local people and get to know the area and its history from their perspective.

It's a huge adventure. I always feel like I am a modern-day explorer when I travel on horseback. You can ride to places that aren't normally traveled on foot because it's too far or the terrain is too treacherous.

What's been your most challenging equitrek so far?

Every "Equitrekking" adven-

ture is a challenge. So far, though, the most challenging was riding a championship cutting horse at a working cattle ranch in northern Colorado.

Cutting horses are trained to separate cattle from a herd. They are sort of like border collies, but much bigger — and of course you are on them! These horses are very fast, strong and agile, so a great deal of strength and agility is required of the rider.

I was able to ride a championship horse, Leana With Style. At home, I strive for perfect posture as an English rider. In Colorado on Leana With Style, I was told to slouch down, lean back and hold on — and wow, you really need to hold on!

You have to be experienced and well-balanced in the saddle just to stay on one of these horses. It was quite a rush and definitely a challenge.

I understand you were in Virginia in May filming an episode for your second season. Where were you?

We filmed in Northern Virginia. When I started to research all of the equestrian opportunities in the state of Virginia (there are a lot), I knew that we should focus the episode to one area, because we would definitely be back.

We filmed the Virginia Gold Cup, the Marriott Ranch, Civil War history on horseback at the Inn at Kelly's Ford, Civil War reenactors from the Black Horse Troop, polo, downtown Middleburg and some canoeing on the Rappahannock River.

One of the reasons that I wanted the Virginia episode was because of the diverse history and riding experiences. We travel all over the world with "Equitrekking," but in Virginia we were able to visit places where events occurred that shaped our nation.

[Traveling by] horseback, just as cavalry officers or George Washington would have when they rode in the area, really gives the history of our nation a more real feeling and opens your imagination.

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