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Horse Show Times

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Serving Northern Virginia, a touch of West Virginia, and a hint of Maryland

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FREE

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Prize
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Photo Courtesy: Tricia Booker - see page 3

Book Review

The Kill

A Hunt Country Suspense Novel by Local

Author, Jan Neuharth

Reviewed By Aggie Sterrett

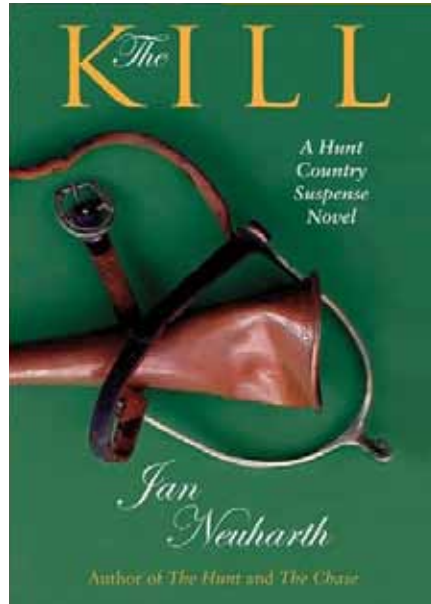
When the beloved Master of the Middleburg Foxhounds, Richard Evan Clarke, is found shot to death while preparing for the hunt's point-to-point race day, things heat up in the local foxhunting community. Events escalate when Clarke's niece, Pulitzer prize winner Abigale Portmann, is called back from a photojournalism assignment in Afghanistan and begins to piece together that her uncle's death was not a random robbery attempt gone bad, as the local authorities surmised, but a brutal murder likely committed by someone he knew.

The list of suspects grows, including a ne'er-do-well landed gentry desperate to sell the family farm to keep up his high-spending lifestyle; the developer who would like to turn that farm into an elite community, effectively cutting off a large portion of the hunt's territory; a social climber willing to do just about anything to enhance her status with the hunt; and Abigale's childhood sweetheart, Manning Southwell, whose motive and lack of alibi make him a prime suspect with the police.

But when Manning has a serious riding accident caused by sabotaged tack, he and Abigale team up to find the killer, and in the process rekindle their love affair and face demons that both have deliberately avoided for almost two decades.

Jan Neuharth's third novel, *The Kill*, is action-packed, well written, and has great, believable dialogue. Although it is hard to put down, it doesn't take a huge time commitment to pick up as the chapters are short and easy to read. *The Kill* is equally appealing to anyone who would like to get lost in a book for a day, or for someone who only has a few minutes to spare on occasion.

The descriptions of foxhunting traditions and equestrian activities, some as mundane as applying hoof dressing, really bring the book to life. Although



the Middleburg Foxhounds are a fictitious hunt, many of the places in the book are real and accurately (and sometimes humorously) described. Neuharth also touches on subjects top-of-mind in the foxhunting community, such as the development of open land leading to the loss of hunting territory.

Neuharth's Hunt Country Suspense Novels have been highly acclaimed by both horse lovers and mystery readers alike. *The Hunt*, her debut novel, was hailed as a "page-turning murder mystery" by *The Washington Post* and was a Benjamin Franklin Award Finalist. First Lady Barbara Bush found it "fast moving and very entertaining." The second novel in the series, *The Chase*, won an IPPY Gold Medal for best regional fiction and was a notable winner of the Eric Hoffer Award.

Not only is *The Kill* fun and entertaining, like both of the previous books there is a lot of knowledge that can be gleaned about the equestrian world in general and foxhunting in particular. All are great independent reads, and any would make a great gift for the horse lover and the not-so-horsey as well, but *The Chase* ties up some loose ends where *The Hunt* leaves off, so make sure to read *The Hunt* first. *The Hunt* and *The Kill*

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Vacation.....continued from p. 23
equine counterparts. The EAP riders walked into the barn on day one and parents were asked to leave! The athletes were provided no assistance and worked independently to prepare their mounts for the day.

During four full days, we learned about shoeing, proper bits and basic equine first aid. We provided all the care for our mounts: feeding, tacking up, cleaning stalls and horses and organizing our areas in competition to demonstrate that horsemanship wasn't limited to riding. We were given open opportunities to discuss issues, ask questions and listen to the incredible stories Lisa offered of her experiences on the circuit.

This year, I was able to bring my own horse, Graceland. I compete in the Children's Jumpers with her; she loves her job. I came to the clinic with an open mind, ready to accept all the help and advice that was given to me.

Karen Healey worked our flat work skills on the first day, encouraging our horses to become more laterally flexible, working on shoulder and haunches in and lengthening and shortening their strides. The following days were jumping exercises; stride placement, position and communication. Ms. Healey organized gymnastics and many bending lines to help our riding techniques, focusing on a lighter but controlling seat and better balance throughout the groups.

Ms. Baldissari never gave us a dull moment during our classes, continuously providing real life stories and examples to help establish the importance of the lesson. She encouraged hands on learning, requiring everyone to take part and ask questions. By the end of the clinic, every rider and every horse had experienced all the lessons, finishing the four days clean shaven, brushed to perfection and left looking like royalty. The horses did at least, but I left with a huge smile and more knowledge and friends than I had before.

I enjoyed every moment at the clinic. I gained a wealth of knowledge in the short four days we were given. I look forward to applying what I learned at the EAP in the show ring and I highly encourage riders to apply.

The EAP is open to USHJA members under 21 years of age, according to USEF rules. The applicant does not need to own a horse but must bring one to the Regional Clinic.

The application process is rigorous. The ambitious applicant must pass the USHJA online Horsemanship Quiz with 80% or higher, then send in an essay application on why the program is important to you and three recommendations (one from your current trainer).

The time spent on the application process is well worth the education I received. I had the opportunity to experience great training sessions, focus on improving my riding skills and barn management knowledge as well as meet others with the same goals.

For more information about the USHJA Emerging Athletes Program, visit the EAP website or contact Carrie Vaught at cvaught@ushja.org or 859.225.6703.

About The Author ~ Courtney Fussell, from Frederick, Md., is a sophomore at Washington College in Chestertown, Md. She competes her 14-year-old Oldenburg mare in Children's Jumpers at rated shows up and down the East Coast. She trains with Benjamin Meredith at Raylyn Farms.

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both include glossaries of equestrian terms, and *The Chase* has fun polo trivia that was new information for me. Be aware that there is some sex, violence, and bad language.

The detail in the writing is paralleled by the detail in the books themselves. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the quality and the design: all have beautiful dust jackets with simple, eye-catching graphics. And each chapter begins with a pen and ink drawing that includes an element of what the chapter is about. This is no small feat considering *The Kill* has 94 chapters.

All in all, I found the books easy to read, hard to put down, and a great addition to any equestrian and/or mystery library.

Neuharth, a former Los Angeles attorney, moved to Virginia in 1985 where she and her husband, Joseph Keusch, established Paper Chase Farms. She and Keusch, who is a former Joint Master of the Fairfax Hunt, reside in Middleburg with their two children. Neuharth will be signing her books on October 6, at the Words and Wine Fundraiser at Prince Michel Winery in Madison County. Signed copies of the series may be purchased at local bookstores or online at www.huntcountysuspense.com.

Horse Yard Sale

Saturday October 20th

8am-3pm

404 Glenmeade Circle
Purcellville, VA.

Hundreds of horse items for the equestrian, rider, collector, owner and enthusiast to include: shirts, show coats, hunt coats, boots, bridles, martingales, bits, saddles, blankets, coolers, scrim, saddle/bridle racks, jewelry, even an ATV, books, artwork, buckets, bits, clothes, blankets, saddle pads & everything in between.

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Tina 703-727-8058
Sandy 540-751-1634



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*Photo must be a jpeg. Deadline for each issue is the 15th of the month prior.

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This offer is limited to ads for horses, ponies, tack, barn, farm equipment, etc. sold by non-professionals. Tasteful personal ads - o.k. Sorry, if selling horses, lessons, boarding, etc. is your "business", please call for special rates on Display ads. HST reserves the right to limit quantities and monitor content.



Empress Hermione - Adorable Pony 14h, 5 y/o bay, Welsh/Tb mare by Penqwyn out of Tb mare. Very dependable, quiet all-around gem. Perfect for showing, hunting, Pony Club, trail rides. Has won over fences at local shows, jumping 2'6". Quiet in the hunt field and loves attention! Willing and ready for more experiences with a junior or small adult. Asking \$6000. Owner/breeder: 540-253-5746, jpl-11@earthlink.net



Prince Harry - Versatile Pony 14.2h 6 yr. old, chestnut geld. Welsh/Tb. by Farnley Ballad out of a Tb mare. Quiet, dependable, lovely disposition, easy keeper. W/T/C, jumps, goes through anything out on the trail, shows, leads, follows. Great potential as hunter or Pony Club mount. Owner/breeder: Asking \$5000. Owner/breeder: 540-253-5746, jpl-11@earthlink.net