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For Immediate Release

St. Lazare Residents Enjoy the Vermont Summer Festival Horse Show

East Dorset, Vermont - Canadians Angela Covert and Mike Lawrence of St-Lazare are making their mark at the Vermont Summer Festival, a five-week hunter/jumper competition running July 12 to August 13 in East Dorset, Vermont.

Two of the nicest people in the business, the couple operate the training and sales business, Eastwood Equine Inc., just outside of Montreal and are 'regulars' at the Vermont Summer Festival.

"This is my ninth year in a row coming to the Vermont Summer Festival," says Angela who, in 2004, won the \$35,000 Otter Creek Grand Prix riding Tomboy Major. "I love the atmosphere, and even though the competition is of a high level, it seems less stressful for some reason. Even my clients ride better here, there seems to be less pressure. I think that John and Dotty are very accommodating and exhibitor friendly."

The Vermont Summer Festival is organized by John and Dotty Ammerman and their hospitality, which includes a popular exhibitor's party every Wednesday during the five-week horse show, is part of what makes the horse show special. Unique promotional ideas also help to inject a sense of fun into the proceedings.

"I really like the neat things that they do at this show," says Angela. "They used to have a 'leading lady rider' award where whoever was leading the standings would ride wearing a sash. I think that the new leading Canadian rider awards are a great incentive, and it is especially nice that they include the hunters as well as the jumpers. It is very clever, and nice that there is both a champion and a reserve champion."

Introduced this year in an effort to be 'Canadian-friendly', the Canadian Circuit Champion Awards see points earned throughout the five-weeks of competition, and, at the end of the show, a \$3,000 US bonus is awarded to both the overall jumper and hunter champions and a \$2,000 US bonus goes to the jumper and hunter reserve champions.

Angela and her clients will be chasing their piece of the bonus money, although other Canadians that came earlier in the circuit - riders like Beth Underhill and Christi McQuaker - already have a head

start. With 11 horses in Vermont, Angela hopes to make up for lost time during the last three weeks during the Vermont Summer Festival.

Of her 11 horses, six are recently imported from Europe. "We went over the first week of June and looked a lot of horses. We vetted seven and bought six. They are all owned by The Eastwood Group, and two are for us to keep and the other four are for sale. We did have some of our own customers in mind for some of them, but we know that if they don't suit our customers, they are good horses for the hunter/jumper market."

The two that Angela will be keeping for herself are Weber, a seven-year-old dark bay Belgian Warmblood gelding that she describes as "really exciting", and Assini, a six-year-old grey Belgian Warmblood mare by Cumano Z, winner of the \$1 million CN Grand Prix at the Spruce Meadows "Masters" Tournament with Jos Lansink. Although the mare is still in quarantine, Angela showed Weber for the first time during the third week of Vermont.

"I rode him three times this week and he was double clear all three times!" said Angela excitedly. "We ended up third in the Level 6, and fifth in the Seven and Eight-Year-Old class. Another one of the new sales horses that I rode, Hameau d'Arville, was the Level 4 Champion. He is an absolute blast to ride, he's fast and careful - he hasn't even touched a jump since we've been here."

Angela also had a good result riding Odysseus H, a nine-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding by Peter Pan that is owned by her client, Marlee Dichter. The pair placed third in Wednesday's \$2,500 Open Jumper class before Marlee, 19, took over the reins, placing second in Thursday's Level 6 and fifth in Saturday's High Junior/Amateur-Owner where she had the fastest time, but dropped a rail in the jump-off. With her other horse, Rico, Marlee topped a field of 35 entries to win Friday's Low Junior/Amateur-Owner competition.

The hardest thing about having horses is parting with them, even when you purchased them with the full intention of selling them on. As Angela confides, "I would love to keep all six, to be honest. One of the horses, a four-year-old, is an unbelievable hunter!"

But horse sales are another reason that Angela and Mike enjoy coming to the Vermont Summer Festival.

"Vermont is very good for sales, every year that we've come, we've sold horses," Angela confirms. "We have sold a lot of horses to the American market over the years, so it is also fun to come to Vermont and see the horses that we have sold competing with their new owners."

One horse that she doesn't have to worry about selling is Oxford, a 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood stallion by Burgraaf out of a Voltaire mare. Having done the 1.35m and 1.40m jumpers in 2005, Angela tried him in the hunter ring this spring as she was just returning to the saddle after separating her shoulder and wanted to take things easy. To her surprise, Oxford turned out to be a fabulous hunter, and is now leading his zone in the Regular Working Hunter division.

"He is so scopey, that is why the four-foot hunters are so easy for him," she says. "He is a great horse with a great mind. You never have to longe him; you just go to the ring. The best thing about him as a stallion is that he passes his great mind on to his offspring. I have three of his babies, and every single one of them has a great mind as well as great talent. Oxford is just so easy going, and I can even take him to be collected by myself, I just put him on the trailer and away we go. In June, he was collecting and showing on the same day."

Owned by Quo Vadis Stable of Treherne, Manitoba, Oxford was imported to Canada as a two-year-old. Now one of the most popular Canadian Warmblood-approved stallions, Oxford's owners are happy to learn that their stallion is showing his versatility by excelling in the hunter ring, having already made his talents known in the jumper arena.

With so many quality horses under her saddle, Angela is on track to take home some of the bonus money from Vermont. And no one deserves it more. A Rider Ambassador for JustWorld International, as well as a sponsored rider by Team Molson and Equifit, Angela's star is rising. One of the busiest couples on the show circuit, Mike is a respected equine dentist whose long list of famous clients includes Ian Millar and Eric Lamaze. In addition, he also organizes the two-week St. Lazare Horse Show held annually at the end of May at their farm and featuring a \$35,000 Grand Prix, an event that Mike soon hopes to turn into a World Cup.

Both Mike and Angela hail from Canada's East Coast, Nova Scotia, but now enjoy operating their business in Quebec. While they do spend their winters in Wellington, Florida, the focus for the next few weeks is firmly on the Vermont Summer Festival.



ATTACHED PHOTO

"Angela Covert-Lawrence claimed the \$35,000 Otter Creek Grand Prix riding Tomboy Major during the 2004 Vermont Summer Festival."

Photo Credit - Flashpoint