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Apologies to the following sponsors who were missed on the November list of sponsors:

Janet "Dolly" Hannon
Katherine Simard
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U.S. Dressage Finals Results

Watch for Suzie Halle's article and pictures on her experience at the Finals coming in the January 2015 Centaur.

Make Sure You Are Receiving Central Office E-Mails!

Check your email to verify that you are receiving emails from rmdds@indra.com

If you are not, you are missing out on the many notifications now being done via email.

New 2015 Dressage Tests Effective Now

The 2015 United States Equestrian Federation Dressage Tests have been published on USEF.org. The new tests are effective Dec. 1, 2014 through Nov. 30, 2018.

In addition to the 2015 USEF Dressage Test booklet, the USEF has collaborated with the United States Dressage Federation to produce the On the Levels app, which provides examples of the new Introductory through Fourth Level dressage tests with commentary from top U.S. trainers and judges. Segments are geared toward improving difficult movements at each level.

The mobile website will feature 31 videos to help riders understand the requirements for tests within each level, including 18 videos of riders performing each test and 13 supplementary test tip videos. The videos will include narration from top athletes, judges, and trainers, including Kathy Connelly, Jan Ebeling, Hilda Gurney, Steffen Peters, and Jessica Jo "JJ" Tate, with each bringing his/her own unique perspective, and providing the viewer with a variety of approaches.

[2015 USEF Dressage Tests](#)

[2015 Dressage Test Booklet](#)

[2015 USDF Tests](#)

In addition to the new USEF and USDF Dressage Tests, all FEI Tests have minor updates in the wording of the Collective Marks as well as changes to the FEI Children, FEI Intermediate A, and FEI Intermediate B Tests. These tests become effective January 1, 2015, and can be found [here](#).

Renew Your Memberships Early, Save \$\$!

[Join or renew](#) your RMDS membership before Dec. 31 for \$60, avoid the \$5 late fee, which begins Jan. 1.

Members receive the monthly Centaur newsletter, are eligible for horse and rider awards and stay connected to Colorado, Wyoming and Utah equine enthusiasts with news and advertising. Members also can submit one free horse-related ad each month.

[Click for Calendar](#)

Chapters

RMDS has 12 chapters in the Rocky Mountain Region. Check for changed days/times/places of meetings! If you would like to change your chapter affiliation you must personally notify the central office in [writing](#).

[Click for Chapters](#)

USDF Region 5

Click [HERE](#) for latest report from Heather Petersen, USDF Region 5 Director.

For the latest updates and current Region 5 news. [Click for Region 5](#)

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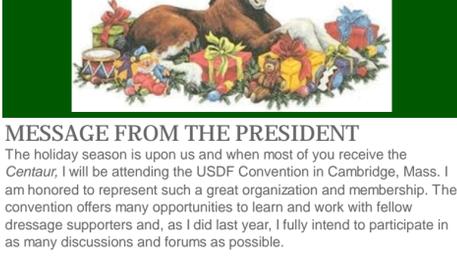
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RMDS and many of our chapters are on Facebook, like our page to keep up with us.

[Like us here](#)



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The holiday season is upon us and when most of you receive the *Centaur*, I will be attending the USDF Convention in Cambridge, Mass. I am honored to represent such a great organization and membership. The convention offers many opportunities to learn and work with fellow dressage supporters and, as I did last year, I fully intend to participate in as many discussions and forums as possible.

This is the time of year that we spend with family and friends, and reflect on our accomplishments and look forward to our goals for 2015. I hope we can work as a group to learn and grow in our knowledge of dressage.

What Can We Do For You in 2015?

We must be financially responsible for RMDS as well as providing opportunities for education and competition. The Executive Board will work continually towards securing the future of our organization. 2015 will be a year that offers educational opportunities for all. We also hope to expand our horizons by listening to the needs and wishes of our members. So, as you take some time to enjoy the holidays, please write down some ideas and send them to the Board meeting in January so we can try to include your wishes in our agenda. If possible, please send a detailed list of what will be needed and a budget. If you do not ask, then we cannot guess at your requirements.

We had a very productive Board of Governors meeting and the Awards Banquet was so much fun, and all the winners looked awesome in their evening attire. I love to watch the smiling faces and, of course, the laughs we all enjoy from Julie Barringer Richers as she makes sure we cannot be distracted from the presentations.

It takes a team to put on the banquet. Laura Speers spends many hours in preparation for the evening and insuring that all goes as planned. Shannon Lemons stays up late preparing all the awards and, fortunately, has enlisted Nina Felsenthal as her assistant. Michelle Anderson jumps in to set things up. Heather Peterson helps to hand out plates and plaques, while Sharon Soos checks in the families and award winners. Door person and greeter Beth Geier keeps everything flowing, and many others help out in so many ways. It was a beautiful night because so many people care and help out. Thank you to all of you.

I hope that everyone has a joyous holiday season with family and friends. Your animal family will certainly appreciate your time, as well.

Mele Kalikimaka e Hauoli Makahiki Hou

Aloha, Gwen Ka'awaloa

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Happy Holidays to all my dressage friends. I know winter is a time when people groan about our weather, but I love it! The spirit of the horse truly is in the Rocky Mountain Region. I love the snow, and the quiet days the colder weather brings. Plus, you can't beat all the wonderful horse fashions, blankets, quarter sheets, cute boots, fancy jackets, muffs, and gloves that are available in so many great colors and designs. Bundling up to ride, and then inevitably, stripping down because of the glorious sun in Colorado, makes me feel alive. I know my horses will be more fit and content if they get their snowy trail rides. Show season feels a long way off, and the horses appreciate the cozy attention they get from us. If it is over 10 degrees, and sunny...I am riding!!

This last month, I attended the US Dressage Finals. I went with my dressage trainer from my youth, Bonna McCuiston, and stayed at a wonderful, old farmhouse in Paris, Ky. We were impressed by the variety of competitors. There were a lot of competitors from Colorado and I was so proud. I can see that this country is finally forming a national base for showing and training dressage horses. It has taken almost 40 years to come this far, and the future looks bright!

After attending the World Equestrian Games in 2010, I promised myself that I would make it to the next Las Vegas World Cup Dressage, April 15-19, 2015. These wonderful, international shows are inspirational and give our young riders an idea of the future of dressage. Las Vegas is so easy to get around, the flights are affordable, and there is not the traffic and congestion of the Olympics. There is nothing like standing up, clapping to a musical freestyle with thousands of other fans, and watching the very best in the world, show us how it's done! I would encourage you to find the money and the time, and attend some of these fabulous international events with your horse friends. These exciting shows build the dressage community in America, and gather a broader fan base for our great sport.

RMDS President Gwen Ka'awaloa and I are attending the USDF Annual Convention in Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 3-6. We will be learning all the new information to lead our Region 5 into a great, New Year for dressage. Growing the sport of dressage through education, supporting our adult amateurs, and blazing a trail for our young riders is our goal. Since we are both dressage instructors, we are committed to growing a trainer's committee for the development and strengthening of our dressage trainers. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Vice President. I am constantly amazed at the depth of commitment I see from our RMDS Board to make dressage great!

Best Regards,

*Aline Brandau, JD
VP RMDS*

RMDS Board Elects Members, Enacts Changes for 2015

Congratulations to several new RMDS Board members (in bold) who were elected to lead committees, offer education opportunities and other services to members. All are unpaid volunteers with one or two-year terms.

The 2015 Board includes:

President Gwen Ka'awaloa
Vice President Aline Brandau
Secretary Nina Felsenthal
Treasurer Sharon Soos

Permanent Committee Chairs:

Didi DeKrey, Adult Amateur
Julie Burt, Junior/Young/Rider
Shannon Lemons, Awards
Beverly Swanson, RMDS Championships
Kerry Louise Miller, Communications
Jon Haugen, Education
Sharon Soos/**Aline Brandau**, Marketing
Simone Windeler, Professional Trainers/Riders
MaryJo Hoepner/HeatherPetersen, Scholarship
Frances Carbonnel, Western Dressage Liaison

Among decisions/announcements from the Board, Committee Chairs and Chapter Presidents attending the RMDS annual Board of Governors meeting and elections on Nov. 15 at the Renaissance Denver Hotel were: [Read complete article](#)

Welcome to 'Dressage College' in First 'L' Program

By Linda Gaber

Linda Gaber is 2012-2014 Editor of Centaur and RMDS Communications Chair.

Some with huge 3-ring school binders, heads bent taking notes while USDF faculty member Lois Yukins roamed the classroom talking into her clip-on microphone and calling on students for answers, and while horse and rider video clips lit the front wall - this could have been a college setting.

That's what the 21 USDF 'L' program participants and 27 auditors experienced in their two-day A Session instruction in November, their introduction to judging and equine biomechanics. Those enrolled were at attention from 8 a.m. to more than 5 p.m. on Saturday day 1, then 8 a.m. to late afternoon on day 2, ending at live evaluations of horses and riders at Rabbit Mountain Equestrian Center in Longmont. Yes, the extra hour Sunday for Daylight Savings in Colorado was appreciated.

Auditors, like I was, also were welcome. We sat "in the back" and passed any questions forward to a judge candidate to ask. We, too, took home an encyclopedia of information, summarized in a seven-page outline.

More Programs Coming to Colorado

For those who missed Session A, Session B on Jan. 10-11 is about judging criteria for gaits and paces, movements and figures with Bill Solyntjes in Loveland/Greeley. Session C March 14-15 with Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez in Elizabeth is about collective marks, equitation, rider biomechanics and basics. [Click HERE for more info](#)

This RMDS-sponsored series in Colorado aims to provide trainers, instructors, competitors and spectators insight into the evaluation techniques of judging dressage; prepare and evaluate candidates who wish to pursue entry into the USEF "r" judge training program; and provide continuing education for licensed judges and 'L' graduates. Here are some highlights from my eight pages of notes:

On Judging

- Your responsibility to the sport is to maintain standards, protect the horse and represent the sport correctly.
- When in doubt, don't do anything harsh. A lot of rules are judgment calls.
- Your responsibility is to the horse. No one is looking out for the horse more than judges.
- Criticizing the horse could lead to its punishment. Don't reward what the horse does wrong.
- When she started out as a judge, she was told she could wear slacks "only if they go with pearls." Judges always had to wear skirts.
- Don't solicit business. Put cell phone on vibrate, no texting or computer in your booth.
- It's easier to ride a test than to judge it. Judges must concentrate, know rules and correct terms, interpret rules fairly, know the biomechanics of the horse, know the course and make sure rider is on it, work well with the scribe and know the scores you have in mind. Practice, practice, practice.
- Stay in a hotel verses private home while judging? Your host and accommodations. It's important to get your sleep. Beware of pitfalls of staying in a private home.
- Keep records of shows and levels judged. Keep a folder with these, contacts, ticket information and notes about show if you want to go back.
- Be nice to scribes. Many judges bring gifts to riders.
- People ride the way they are turned out. All scribes must wear a helmet, but a correctly fitting helmet is the most important.
- It takes a lot of time to develop your methodology and comment terminology for judging and scoring. Some judges start scoring at a 5 and go up or down. Some start at 10. Lois looks at how a horse is meeting the training scale requirements.
- She explained the USDF formula: Basics + Criteria +/- Modifiers = Final Score. Basics are training, gaits, harmony, for example. Criteria are what the horse and rider pair are supposed to be doing. Modifiers are little inaccuracies, a trip, for example. These are not as important as Basics and Criteria, but do affect the score.

On Horse Biomechanics

- The horse's back is like a bridge. The joints work better with a rounder back.
- The horse's neck is the most important and most easily influenced, most over-ridden, most incorrectly ridden part. There is no movement in dressage where the poll is not the highest part of the horse.
- A horse should walk like a jungle cat.
- The best horse ridden the worst can't win. The worst horse ridden the best can win.
- When asked about judges being prejudiced for or against a breed, sex, age or other horse characteristics, Lois said: We teach that we don't have prejudices. She then related this comment by Gary Rockwell: "They are all chestnut horses and you judge what you see them do."
- A horse needs longitudinal balance (front to back, right to left) before he can have lateral balance (left to right, right to left).
- Horses have to have engagement to have impulsion.
- It is hard for a horse to balance from the rear when a rider is pulling its front down.
- Horses cannot collect from the front, but collect from the rear.
- Being level on their feet is a big component of horses being able to be straight.

Session D1, D2 and the testing have not yet been approved for RMDS.

To enroll in Sessions B and or C, as a participant or auditor, visit education@rmdds.org or contact Jon Haugen, 417 Promontory Dr., Loveland, CO 80537, 970-217-7820.

4 Members New Certified USDF Instructors

Congratulations to four RMDS members in Colorado who are new USDF Certified Instructors/Trainers.

Joan Clay of Fort Collins is qualified at Training through First Level. Certified at Third through Fourth Level are **Clayton Martin** of Blanca, **Dolly Hannon** of Golden and **Gwen Ka'awaloa** of Elizabeth.

Watch for an article in the January *Centaur* with insight from three of these established judges and professionals on the USDF certification program, as well as their reasons for pursuing the rigorous top-level certifications.

Visit usdf.org for a complete list of USDF Certified Instructors/Trainers.

Frances Carbonnel Wins Open Level 2 & 3 Championships at Western Dressage World Finals

Article info provided by WDAA

The Western Dressage Association's 2014 Western Dressage World Championship Show Nov. 1-2 in Tulsa, Okla. The weekend was captivating as the two-day event experienced 350 percent growth from last year and filled four arenas with more than 430 scheduled rides featuring all aspects of the discipline. Riders came from 21 states, four Canadian provinces and two overseas countries and partnered with horses representing more than 20 breeds and types. The show was a testament to both the diversity and camaraderie that exist in the discipline.

Hundreds of riders and spectators celebrated on the show grounds in Tulsa, and more than 7,500 joined in worldwide, courtesy of free live streaming. Classes included all levels of Western Dressage from Introductory to Level 3 and also presented gaited horse offerings and freestyles. Buckles were awarded to high point by level and division: junior, amateur and open.

Frances Carbonnel, an RMDS Pikes Peak Chapter member, was champion at Open Level 2 and 3 with two of her horses, Esteban B, Andalusian stallion, and Jubilee Banjo, Half Andalusian gelding. Frances is the RMDS Western Dressage Liaison. Ask her to show you her winning belt buckles, they are grand!

The fun continued late into the evening on Nov. 2 with the Saddle Up Party to honor the horses and riders, as well as generating excitement for what 2015 will bring. The exhibitors had a chance to mingle and swap stories at the festivity. The evening wrapped up with thank yous, farewells and fantastic door prizes - including a custom Harmony Western Dressage Saddle.

All of the amazement would not have been possible without the efforts of the WDAA's great partners, including the Pinto Horse Association, which handled logistics and administration for the World Show, the American Morgan Horse Association for sponsoring the Saddle Up Party and Western Dressage Riding Gear for donating the saddle! WDAA is also very grateful to the many volunteer and contract individuals and groups who so generously shared their time, talents and donations to ensure a wonderful show experience and quality event for exhibitors, spectators and horses!

The spectacular World Show experience was deeply focused in the WDAA's mission. Each horse had their bit and equipment checked for rule compliance. Exhibitors shared the wonderful stories of the horses in the arena through live-streamed video interviews, endearing them to their fellow competitors and spectators alike. A spirit of camaradery and friendship flourished, and appreciation and honor for the horse were both bountiful and profoundly displayed. The opportunity to celebrate Western Dressage was educational and fun!