

THE CENTAUR



From the Judges' Point-of-View

Point-of-View

The information in these articles is the sole opinion and responsibility of the author, and not that of RMDS.

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The Judges Won't Know

-Kathy Simard, USDF 'L' Graduate and Certified Instructor

*** All names have been changed to protect the innocent. The horse's name is not mentioned to protect the truly innocent.**

There once was a woman named Mary Smith* who wanted to ride dressage. She only half listened to her trainer during lessons and only half listened to the conversations of her barn-mates. As Mary heard them discuss dressage she thought "I can walk, trot and canter. On a good day, I can ride a circle and straight lines. Sometimes I can even halt! I am going to enter a dressage show!"

Next, Mary thought "I need a dressage sounding name." She heard that Europeans did well in dressage, so she officially changed her name to Ivanka Dressage. She thought "that will sound great over the loud speaker and everyone will be impressed."....until they actually watched her ride.

Ivanka realized that her current horse resembled a llama more than a dressage horse so she decided to ride him in really tight draw reins every day until the show. She thought "the judge will never know." But once her horse came down centerline and halted, the judge at C could see every braid on the horse's neck because her horse now appeared to be headless...and the judge knew.

Ivanka was not known for steady quiet hands, but she thought that if her horse's head came up, she would just use her hands to see-saw, pull, yank, or do whatever else she could to get it back down. She decided to wear black gloves on her black horse with the black mane wearing a black saddle and pad. She thought the judge would never know...but the judge saw the head-wagging, the poll and jaw locked, the stiff topline, the under-neck muscles bulging, and her horse's head up in the air.

Just in case the judge might be smarter than she thought, Ivanka decided that when directly in front of the judge, she would put her hands really low and wide, lock her elbows and hold her horse on the bit. In this way she thought she could achieve what would appear to be quiet, steady hands and deceive the judge...but the judge saw her horse with his poll and jaw locked, and pretty much everything else tense with a look in his eyes of "help me."

Cont'd on page 2

A Reminder

to those Competing for RMDS Championships.

Horse, Rider, and Owner MUST be current with RMDS membership prior to any rides for scores to count towards qualification.

Also, information on file with RMDS, USDF, and USEF must be identical...ie. same owner, horse's name etc.

Region 5 Report

There are several **DEADLINES** coming up:

Region 5 GMO volunteer of the year award, and nominations for GMO newsletter and website of the year are due to USDF by August 31. The Ruth Arvanette Grant for three members to go to the USDF convention (up to \$500 airfare expenses, plus free registration, and ½ hotel expense) is due to USDF by August 31. The Youth Executive Board offers four scholarships up to \$1000 for the convention. Take advantage of this opportunity to attend the convention in Denver. Applications are due August 15 and are available online at www.usdf.org.

The FEI Junior and Young Riders are preparing for the NAJYRC championships at Kentucky Horse Park. As I write this we still have qualifying competitions, and the riders are not selected. We have had a great fund raising year and a lot of enthusiasm. Good Luck to those that make the team or compete as individuals, and a big thanks for all the volunteers and contributions!

This year our Regional Championships will be at WestWorld in Albuquerque, NM on October 16-18, 2009 and the next year they will be at Colorado Horse Park on September 2-5, 2010. We had to move the dates earlier due to the 2010 World Equestrian Games September 25 - October 10, 2010 at the

Kentucky Horse Park. So plan your competition year in 2010 to qualify 30 days prior to our championships.

We are initiating a Life-Time Achievement Award for our region. The purpose is to recognize significant, longtime volunteer service to our region. Region 5 is on the frontier of dressage with many geographical and cultural challenges. Diligent efforts of individuals within our region encouraged the start and continued growth of dressage benefits for our members. I would like to have five people for the selection committee: Dianne Stanley, our historical committee representative, and three others to represent different GMOs in our region. If you are interested in serving on this committee and helping to develop this and other historical initiatives, please contact me as soon as possible. I would like to have this committee in place by July 1 with an August 1 deadline for submission of nominees. I am planning to announce the award at the regional championships. I still need volunteers to serve on the committee. If you are interested, please email Dianne pstanmt@bresnan.net or me at my new email address: huntery8@gmail.com.

Stay Cool and Happy Riding!

-Theresa Hunt, Region 5 Director

Judges Won't Know...Cont'd from page 1

Ivanka decided to wear spurs to keep her poor mount motivated in the show ring. Like her hands, Ivanka's leg control left much to be desired. She decided the best thing to do was to wear her longest spurs and then just set her legs against her horse's sides. That way her leg would look quiet, her horse would keep going, and the judge would never know...that is until her horse's tail started swishing, his back was tight, and he traveled short behind with an occasional croup high crouch for good measure.

Ivanka had meticulously studied her dressage test and knew the letters of the arena. As she rode her test, she dutifully performed a movement at each letter, and from letter to letter. Never mind that there was no preparation, and the movements were unrecognizable to the judge. The circles were oddly

shaped. She was two meters off the rail. Transitions were herky-jerky and abrupt. She went sideways doing something that the judge had never seen before. But Ivanka thought to herself "everything was done at the correct letter."

Ivanka came to the end of her test. At X her horse jiggled. Ivanka had heard this was worth extra points because someone named Anky did it. Ivanka left the arena feeling triumphant...until she got her scores. Ivanka lamented that it was all her horse's fault and the judge didn't know what she was talking about!

Ivanka has a lot to learn about Dressage and the Judges' ability to see.

Chapter News and Scholarship Updates

High Plains Chapter

High Plains is putting together a Dressage Schooling show for July 11th. Watch for an email blast from RMDS with more info and go to www.highplainsdressage.com for prize list and contact information. As always, volunteers are appreciated to help at these shows. Hope to see some of you there.

Our monthly meetings are still the 3rd Tuesday of each month in Parker. We have new officers on board this year so new ideas are being discussed all the time. Additional input from members at large is more than welcome. Go to the High Plains website for updates each month.

-Alex Curnutte, President, High Plains Chapter

2009 Scholarship Recipients

It has been a year, almost to the day, since I was forced to undergo cervical fusion surgery. Away from lessons and any serious riding slightly longer than that, this day in May, when I am once again on my horse, with Sarah Dodge taking us through our paces, is one I have been dreaming of. Manassis is out of shape, and so am I, but I feel energized. I am amazed to experience, once again, the harmony between Manassis and I that I feared had slipped away forever on the day of my surgery. A tear or two slipped down my cheeks as I felt my body remember, and Manassis offer me, a glimpse of the former partnership we had worked hard to achieve. Thank you to RMDS for those tears of joy, which I could not have experienced without your support, the scholarship, and the beauty of dressage.

-Sharon Gilbert & Black Manassis



K.C. seen here showing 8th Heaven Farms' "Olaf"



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Are You Ready to Move Up?

-Janet Foy, FEI "1" Judge

A very common complaint of judges is riders showing above their level of competency. As a group, judges do not like to give low scores. However, we are also the horse's last line of defense, and take it personally when an educated horse is being confused and frustrated by a rider's conflicting aids. Just because the horse you purchased was shown recently at PSG, doesn't mean that is where your new partnership belongs.

In Europe there are systems firmly in place that measure the rider's competency. The level at which you show is regulated by these rules. These systems have been discussed and discarded for the USA. However, I do feel riders need to take more responsibility for their performance and not always blame 'the horse.' Let's discuss our dressage performance in relation to our school performance in class.

In school if you did not receive C's and above (60%=C=Satisfactory) you did not pass 2nd grade and go on to 3rd.

TRAINING LEVEL

Let's discuss our competence at Training Test Four. Your performance in this test will tell you if you are ready to move on to First Level. In my opinion, you should be scoring 90% of the time at least 63-65% (which is a C+).

63-65 is a C+

65-67 is a B-

70-79 is a B

75-80 is a B+

80-100 is an A

Your horse should now be on the bit most of the time, showing the ability to bend both directions and should have smooth and obedient transitions on curved lines in preparation for the increased demands of first level. Again, I am discussing your performance at the highest test of the level, in this case Training Level Test Four. This test also requires the judge to give you a score for cantering on a straight line in preparation for the canter lengthening.

As for you, the rider, hopefully you have been faithfully on the lunge line learning how to sit the trot correctly, in the middle of the saddle, with quiet lower legs and elastic hands. You should be refining your technique and effect of the aids.

FIRST LEVEL

Again, competent scores. But what else? The horse must show willingness at the beginning tests, and the ability at the last test of the level to lengthen the trot and canter, and remain in

balance as well as stay straight. There should be the beginning of a downward transition as well. More lateral suppleness is required, with 10 meter circles being introduced, as well as submission to the lateral moving aids with the introduction of leg yields. Leg yields should improve lateral reach and fluid crossover BOTH ways.

Also needed are:

Trot/halt/trot transitions

Transitions on straight lines

Some longitudinal and lateral suppleness of the poll

Steady tempo and balance in the trot (truly a consistent level balance, where at training level this comes and goes at times)

Straightness on the long side. Confirmed pushing of the hind legs. Test 4 actually encourages the idea of the hind legs carrying at times. First 4 requires a higher degree of balance than first one.

Remember, a B score or above from the judge means that you have the 'right stuff' to move on to second level, where the requirements change quite a bit. From pushing, to carrying hind legs. From level balance, to uphill balance.

SECOND LEVEL

Needed is a higher degree of competence now. More than the ABC's of dressage and the formation of words, we're looking at whole sentences!!!

Hind legs must carry. Show uphill tendency. Simple Changes. Collection. The great black hole of training!! Higher degree of straightness and carrying. Show a small ability to change the frame as well as the length of stride without losing the uphill balance. Firmly on the bit. Poll should be supple laterally for shoulder-in, travers and renvers.

THIRD LEVEL

A higher degree of collection should not come and go as it does at second level. Extended trot and canter, the gaits which go the most OVER the ground (mediums, remember, go the most OFF the ground). Flying Changes are also now in test one. This one movement stops more progression up the levels due to a lack of attention to the basics earlier. Clear and prompt transitions, no more gradually cruising back to another gait.

The amount of time between the movements is also decreasing.

There must be more attention paid to the corners and their use! Remember the corners are our friends. This is where we prepare the horse for the next movement! Ride from half halt to half halt. Less time to organize and 'fix' things. The horse needs a quicker and more correct reaction to the aids.

The rider must be in control of their body, weight and balance. They must be able to sit on either hind leg and give clear aids or else many interesting things happen! Half pass may lose cadence, and assorted flying changes will occur as the rider sashays in the saddle!

FOURTH LEVEL

Very Collected canter
Collected walk
Tempi changes
Frame and stride adjustable
Development of confirmed self carriage
More beautiful physique of the horse
Greater lateral and longitudinal suppleness

PSG/Intermediare I

Changes secure, straight, with expression
Ability to show mobility of forehand quickly between movements (zig zags)
Success in half and full pirouettes, control, strength
Higher degree of cadence and self carriage
Power and ground cover without losing balance in extensions

Intermediare II/Grand Prix

In the first year the horse must learn the test. It also takes one year for rider to learn the test.

Ability to maintain engagement and lightness of fore hand for long periods of time
Straightness at optimum development (one tempis, piaffe, passage)
Harmony
Quick reaction to aids
Flying changes, piaffe, and passage all are very individual as far as reaction to aids. The most experienced riders can get on a strange horse and do the entire test and have problems with communication here in these movements.

Not every horse can be a GP horse. I can name several small tour champions that should have been left there, rather than moving them up and having unhappy and average performances at the GP level. Again, the rider 'forcing' the horse through the test is not what the judges want to see. Is this really what is best for the horse, your partner?

I have judged many horses that in my opinion are not GP horses. I had 7 small tour horses that I never took into the GP ring. Why? They were missing one of the following: one

tempis, piaffe, or passage. Period. The horse must do all three. If they don't, then this is not a GP horse. Do not come to the show ring. I am not talking about the green or inexperienced horse that does a few one tempis and then has a meltdown. I am talking about the horse that clearly can NOT perform one of these movements; in fact, many riders just give up and ride straight thru the movement in hopes that we, the judge, won't notice that the horse is only trotting slower.

Also, remember that not every horse can have an 8 for all movements. You must know your partner well enough to know when a 'safe' 6 is the best he can do. Trying to push a 6 to an 8 often results in a 4.

On the other hand, the movements that are your horse's strengths: SHOW THEM OFF to their full advantage.

Think of the gymnastics competition at the Olympics. The vault specialist can get 9-10 on all three vaults. Same for the balance beam expert. However, I have never seen an all around competition where the competitor scores 9-10 in all the aspects of this competition. I wonder why we keep getting discussion about why dressage champions don't score 100%??? I think this is a bit blind of the people questioning the judging. Our horses are all around competitors, not just a piaffe specialist or an extended walk specialist. However, even at the top, someone can make a mistake and fall off the beam; or land with two feet. So, I do not agree with those who think 'this horse must always have a 10 in the extended walk.'

SUMMARY

To move up:

1. Have at least 8-10 scores of 65% or above, at the highest test of the prior level.
2. Show before at least 6 different judges. Include 2-3 FEI judges in the mix to make yourself honest and raise your standards.
3. Make sure scores are obtained over 5 shows, not just one ring 'all is quiet' shows. If shows were rated, think of 2-3 shows of the highest caliber with LOTS of top competition (CDI's, Regional Championships, 3-ring and above shows, multiple judges)
4. You should not 'fail' (4 or lower) at any movement more than 10% of the time. If you do, you have a hole in your training. GO BACK.

Try this competition year to ride to a higher standard!

IF NOT NOW, WHEN? IF NOT YOU, WHO?

The greatest compliment will be other competitors saying behind your back "no wonder they win, they have an expensive horse." If no one is talking about you, you are not accomplishing anything. (I thank Kay Meredith for this bit of wisdom.) Chin up!

If the uninitiated comes to the show and says, "That looks hard," you are not doing dressage. If she says, "That looks easy," that's a big deal! CONGRATULATIONS. You have harmony and a true partnership with your horse.

The Big Bad Judge

-KC Parkins-Kyle, USDF 'L' Graduate

I think what has continued to surprise me about sitting behind the judge's booth is the terror it seems to strike in the competitor.

I always feel a little bad about that. Do I look that mean? Or has their experience been so bad that their fear is warranted? If it's possible to put your mind at ease, I'd like to try.

First of all, we are supposed to be here to help. If your experiences have led you to another conclusion, I am sincerely sorry. I can't possibly apologize enough for the mean, spiteful, power-grubbing, ego demeaning judges that are out there. Although I can say that they are few and far between. Even the judge sitting at the end of the arena has, at some point, been a victim of the 'meanie.' Think of it as another opportunity to learn something from your horse and don't worry about the mean judge. Obviously, they have bigger problems than you and your horse do.

Sometimes the competitor takes the judge's comments far too personally. Sometimes the comments are not fully explainable in the limited space given on the test. If the judge says you are 'not ready for this level,' that doesn't mean you are incapable. It means that today, you did not present a pair that is quite ready. You probably will be ready someday, maybe fairly soon, but that is not for the judge to determine. Every comment on the test should be a reflection of that moment, and only that

moment. We have to try to be honest with you today, so at future shows you aren't misled into thinking you are headed toward a direction that you may not be. We try to give you information today that will help you look closer at yourself and your horse, so that you can be more successful at future shows. Looking at yourself honestly is often uncomfortable. But most judges really do want to help. We have been in your shoes! If the comment seems totally out of line to you; ignore it. It is the judge's opinion after all; that doesn't necessarily make it true.

The judge has to justify the score they gave you. What does that mean? That means if you show me your test 2 days after the show, I should be able to read the comments, and even if I don't remember the test, I should be able to summarize what you needed to do to acquire a better score, or what problems may have led to the current score. That is assuming the score was unsatisfactory for you. No one ever complains that their score was too high. They may comment on the generosity of the judge, but they never want it explained to them. We have to say what we perceived, and provide a comment that tells you how to make it a higher score; or what kept it from being a higher score. Newbies to Dressage often look at all the comments and think, "Didn't I do anything right?". That is not the point. The point is to help you get even better.

On a final note, the terror of competitors might stem from the humiliation of having a bad performance. Rest assured of two things: 1) You aren't going to show me anything I haven't seen before and 2) I've probably done as bad or worse in my time. The wonderful thing about a horrible performance is that it's bound to get better. Judges do feel bad for the riders when their horses are disobedient or unruly. What can we possibly do or say to help that? All we can do is reflect what we see and try to offer an encouraging word. We do want to see you again, because obviously you and/or your horse need that experience more often. Performing is very stressful and takes time and experience to become better at. You don't get better at it by not doing it. Every judge has been a competitor and knows what it's like to be out there. You are not alone! There is no disaster we haven't seen or been through ourselves. What's most important is that the rider is safe, and learns a little something.

In general, we need to remember that the judges are there to be helpful with their criticisms, not hurtful. Sometimes it hurts a little anyway, but it is not intended that way. It is an effort to help you improve in your riding skills. Isn't that why you're there to begin with?

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Releasing - Letting the Aids Breathe

-Sandra Hotz, USEF 'S' Judge

One of most significant things I have learned over the years is the importance of the release.

I am not a big fan of the "hold and drive until your arms turn numb and your legs fall off" method; I prefer my horses to be light to the aids. The most effective tool I have found is the release. This momentary "giving up" of the aids after every request - driving, half halting, straightening, directing, bending, stopping, reining-back, flying changes, quickening the hind leg, etc. is crucial in keeping a horse light and responsive. The aid itself poses the question to the horse, *Can you listen to this?* The release provides the feedback to the horse that his answer, reaction, or *Try* was noticed and appreciated.

The release does not need to be as obvious as giving the reins up to the horse's ears or lifting your legs six inches off the horse's sides and holding them there for 20 minutes, but it can be as simple as a gentle exhalation while briefly relaxing the muscles of the legs, seat, back and hands. The horse feels this instantly. I like to think of it as letting the aid or aids "breathe" for a moment.

...I can release most of the way through the pirouette, letting the horse just follow my seat around. It's a "divine feeling," to use the words of the old masters.

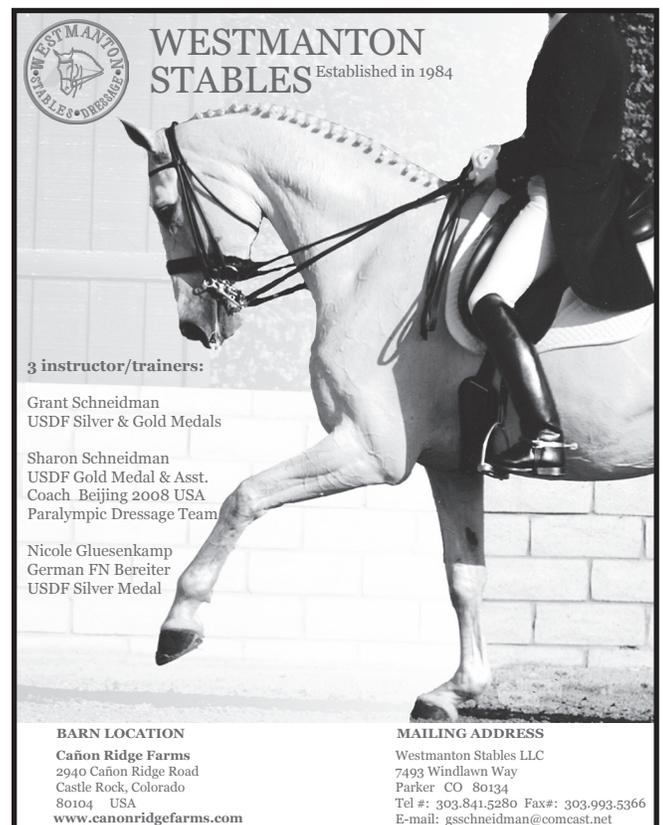
The length of time for the release varies, but it is usually from a split second to several seconds. I sometimes ride canter pirouettes in which I can release most of the way through the pirouette, letting the horse just follow my seat around. It's a "divine feeling," to use the words of the old masters. It is also fun to develop the piaffe this way. It is a wonderful feeling to have a horse piaffe quietly and actively by giving only tiny aids interspersed with releases, instead of constantly squeezing or nagging. Needless to say, it is also nicer to watch.

Another benefit of using the release is that the horse gains confidence and balance, because he starts seeking more and more moments of release. The corrections the rider has to apply become smaller and the releases more frequent, resulting in a horse that is increasingly "on his own" in-between increasingly subtle aids. The more the horse comes "through" from behind, the quieter and more sensitive the rider can apply the aids.

I remember, years ago, riding in countless important shows at which I was too nervous to relax enough in-between giving the aids. I sometimes wonder how I managed to ride successfully in the FEI tests when sometimes I felt like I was holding my breath through the whole thing. Imagine how the horse must have felt.

I would sometimes go home knowing that I would have to spend days suppling and making friends with my horse again.

The same was sometimes true when I rode with famous or demanding trainers and clinicians. I robotically followed their instruction without using my own sense of feel and letting my aids periodically breathe. At the end of the lessons, the instructors were usually happy, since I could perform pirouettes, changes, piaffe and passage on cue, and to their satisfaction. Unfortunately, I would sometimes go home knowing that I would have to spend days suppling and making friends with my horse again. Now, I rarely feel the need to "fix" my mistakes after returning home from a show or clinic. Instead, I try to support my horse at the moment he needs it, letting the aids breathe in-between. The result is a happy horse who understands what I want and willingly works with me in a relaxed way. What fun!



WESTMANTON STABLES Established in 1984

3 instructor/trainers:

Grant Schneidman
USDF Silver & Gold Medals

Sharon Schneidman
USDF Gold Medal & Asst.
Coach, Beijing 2008 USA
Paralympic Dressage Team

Nicole Gluesenkamp
German FN Bereiter
USDF Silver Medal

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Update: The USDF L Judge Program

-Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez, USEF 'S' Judge

The USDF L Judges' program is the premier judges' training program in the world.

Both the format and the educational experience are now being recognized by many countries outside the United States. Passing the program is required before applying for an "r" license with the USEF. Although it is geared towards developing judges, many people are not aware of how valuable this program is for riders, competitors, and trainers.

USDF is in the process of changing the program to be more competitor friendly and it will consist of two parts: one for those who just want to participate as auditors, and one for those who are considering moving on to become judges.

Part-1 is comprised of sessions A, B, and C. Each session is held over a weekend and taught by an instructor/judge from the L faculty. Session A covers rules, biomechanics, and gaits. Session B covers test movements and methodology. Session C covers collective marks, and includes some practice judging through second level. Each session has new audio/visual material as well as the use of demo horses and riders to evaluate the criteria. Sessions are taught in the classroom as well as in an arena. No riding requirements are required to be a participant in Part-1. This allows for those of us who want to work on their scores towards Part-2 to get a head start in the program, or for anyone who wants to audit to expand their knowledge of dressage. You can learn so much by observing and improving your eye for what is required in each movement and gain a better understanding of quality in the gaits, and how this affects movement and scores.

Participants may attend Part-1 with the option of continuing on to Part-2, or wait until a future date if desired. They may want to have more time to gain experience or obtain the required scores. In order to attend Part-2 the candidate must have a minimum of three scores of 60% or better at second level. They will also be required to have scribing hours as well as sitting with a judge at a recognized show, but this can be obtained at anytime during the program.

Part-2 consists of sessions D1, D2, and the final exam. The D sessions are held at recognized shows with 10 participants at a time. The instructor will have everyone practice-judge 6 rides of the highest tests at each level. Scores are tabulated and compared to the instructor's scores of the same rides. Tests will be discussed on each movement, to include comments and further remarks. These are learning sessions in which each participant can ask questions and discuss the reasoning behind the scores. Participants also learn to make appropriate comments to reinforce their scores, and to give helpful remarks.

The last session includes a test of rules and theory. Two members of the L faculty preside over this session. More judging is done at a show, and instructors go over all participant's tests to evaluate if they are qualified to pass the program. Passing has two categories, a score of 65% or better is passing but a score of 70% or higher is passing with "distinction." It is a requirement to pass with distinction in order to move on and apply for a "r" license, as well as having to obtain references from other judges and show personnel.

Candidates who pass the program are known as "L" graduates, not judges. This gives you some idea of what is involved in becoming a judge...it is extensive (not to mention expensive) training, and our goal is to make better judges for the future of the sport.

Improving one's judging skill is an ongoing process no matter what level of qualification a judge has achieved. I have been judging for over 30 years and it is always an honor to be invited to judge. It is a constant challenge to provide helpful feedback and constructive criticism to riders, while always being an advocate for the horse. The L program provides an excellent start, and I highly recommend this program for anyone wanting to expand their understanding and knowledge of the art of dressage.

It should be noted that RMDS L program in 2010 will not yet follow this new format.

A nail may save the horseshoe, the horseshoe may save the horse, the horse may save the rider, and the rider may save the kingdom.

-Turkish proverb

About RMDS

2009 RMDS Executive Board

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Registration Officials and			
Show Standards	Central Office	720-890-7825	rm@rm@rm@rm.org
Scheduling	Central Office	720-890-7825	rm@rm@rm@rm.org
Scholarship	Loni Gaudet	970-532-0852	lonigaudet@earthlink.net

Chapter Presidents

Arkansas Valley	Brenda Haley	719-275-0118	shininghorse@copper.net
Boulder Valley	Nicole Donohue	303-678-8870	hobbyhorse6789@yahoo.com
Colorado Springs	Simone Windeler	719-540-2000	wjsimone@msn.com
Foothills	Dolly Hannon	303-919-4112	dollyhannon@msn.com
Grand Valley	Lisa Binse	970-243-8543	lbawprints@yahoo.com
High Plains	Alexandra Curnutte	303-663-0358	curnutt@msn.com
Northern Colorado	Laura Speer	970-371-2934	riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com
Tri-State	Darlene Vaughn	307-332-7261	popagieranch@hotmail.com
Wasatch Mountains	Sally Shaffer	435-640-8797	sshaffer4@yahoo.com
Western Colorado	Judith Family	970-923-8832	dns@rof.net

Governing Bodies

UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION

USDF 859-971-2277 www.usdf.org

4051 Iron Works Parkway

Lexington, KY 40511

USDF Region 5:

Director Theresa L Hunt hunterry@mindspring.com

FEI JRYR Coordinator Susan Rudman 303-697-8528 sewrunred@msn.com

Website www.usdfregion5.org

US EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, INC 859-258-2472 www.usef.org

USEF

4047 Iron Works Parkway

Lexington, KY 40511

RMDS is a USDF Group Member Organization and RMDS members are automatically USDF Group Members.

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About RMDS

RMDS CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE

Arkansas Valley: 3rd Thurs., location TBD, 6 pm.
Brenda Haley, 719-275-0118,
www.horsetop.net

Boulder Valley: 2nd Mon., even months, location TBD,
Claudia Barkmeier 303-417-1675,
claudiabarkmeier@yahoo.com,
Nicole Donohue 303-678-8870,
hobbyhorse6789@yahoo.com

Colorado Springs: 3rd Tues., Colorado Springs City Hall, Simone Windeler 719-540-2000, wjsimone@msn.com
www.CSDressage.org

Foothills: quarterly meetings, location TBD,
Dolly Hannon, 303-919-4112,
dollyhannon@msn.com

Grand Valley: 1st Thurs. each month, location TBD,
Lisa Binse, 970-243-8543,
Lbpawprints@yahoo.com

High Plains: 3rd Tues. each month, 7 pm,
Warhorse Inn, Parker,
Alex Curnutte, 303-663-0358,
curnuttes@msn.com
www.highplainsdressage.com

Northern Colo.: 3rd Tues., each month, location TBD,
Laura Speer, 970-330-7233,
riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com

Penrose: Inactive for 2009,
Sharon Ghilarducci, 719-462-5760,
quailridgedrsg@hotmail.com

Tri State: TBA,
Darlene Vaughan, 307-332-7261,
popoagieranch@hotmail.com

Wasatch Mountains
Sally Shaffer, 435-640-8797
Location TBD

Western Colorado: Judith Family,
970-923-8832, dns@rof.net

Meeting Schedule of the RMDS Executive Board

All RMDS Executive Board meetings occur on the second Thursday of every odd-numbered month. Steering Committee meetings are held on the second Monday of every even-numbered month. Board of Governor's meeting is held the second Saturday of Nov. Contact the Central Office for precise details.

RMDS SPONSORED EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

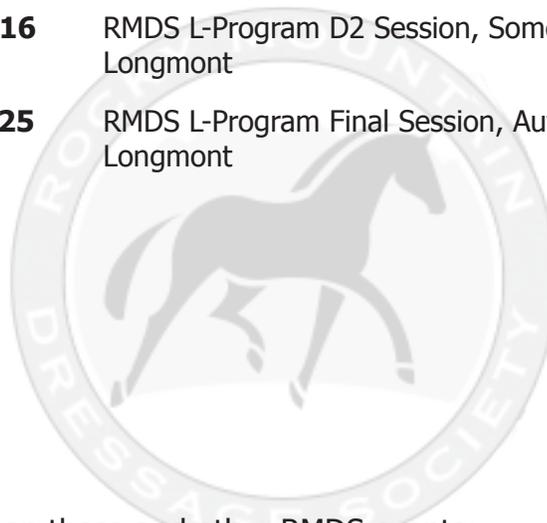
All events are open to everyone to audit or participate unless otherwise stated. A great opportunity to continue your education.

2009

- July 10-11** USDF Youth Team Championships & USDF AA Team Championships, Autumn Hill
- Sept 24** Rocky Mountain Series-Sport Horse Breeding Finals & USDFBC Finals, Colorado Horse Park, Parker
- Sept 25-27** RMDS Open and Championship Show, Colorado Horse Park, Parker
- Oct 10-11** RMDS Continuing Education with Lendon Gray, Somerset Farms, Longmont. Instructors, riders, and auditors welcome.

2010

- Jan 30** RMDS Judges' Continuing Education featuring Janet "Dolly" Hannon. Location TBA.
- May 15-16** RMDS L-Program D2 Session, Somerset Farms, Longmont
- July 24-25** RMDS L-Program Final Session, Autumn Hill IEC, Longmont



For details on these and other RMDS events:

- Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drgw.net - Education Chairman
- Read the Centaur, or go to the website at www.rmids.org
- Contact the RMDS Central Office 720-890-7825, or email rmids@rmids.org

The Centaur Newsletter

The Centaur newsletter is published monthly. To guarantee that ads and articles will run in a given month, they must be received by the 10th of the month prior to the month of publication, i.e. January 10 for the February edition. If not received by the deadline, articles and ads may be placed in the following issue, if not time sensitive.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For article suggestions, articles, columns, letters-to-the-editor: Centaur Editor, Cathy Van Berg, 1767 Rose Petal Lane, Castle Rock, CO 80109, Phone: 303.916.6136, email: vanbergc@yahoo.com

ADVERTISING

RMDS Office, Beth Geier, 2942 Park Lake Dr., Boulder, CO 80301, Phone: 720.890.7825, email: rmds@rmds.org

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

For information about corporate advertising and/or sponsorship, please contact Beth Geier (contact info above.)

Artwork (ads) must be provided in electronic format. Acceptable forms include: jpeg, pdf, tiff, eps, and doc. IF UNSURE ABOUT AD FORMATTING, please contact the editor (contact info above) for consultation. No substitutions may be accepted. If your ad is submitted in a file format other than those listed above, you will be contacted regarding an additional charge for reformatting or redesign. Hourly charge for redesign/reformat is \$35, in minimal units of one hour.

Please be sure to include a printed version of your ad with your payment so that the ad may be proof-read against the electronic version. Printed ad copy cannot be used as final art.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads may be submitted via email to the RMDS office (address above.) You may also type or hand-write a classified ad and mail it to RMDS headquarters, attn: Beth Geier, *The Centaur*. Please limit your classified ad copy to 50 words or less. Exceeding 50 words will result in additional charges per line.

PAYMENT AND AD COPY DELIVERY

Email ads to: rmds@rmds.org, and cc the electronic copy to vanbergc@yahoo.com. Send payment and hard-copy to the RMDS office, Beth Geier, 2942 Park Lake Dr., Boulder, CO 80301.

AD RATES AND SIZE SPECIFICATIONS

Classified \$20 per item for sale (includes web listing.) 50 words maximum. Classified w/photo \$32 per item for sale.

Full Page.....	\$1507.5" x 9.5"
Half Page.....	\$907.5" x 4.75"
Outside back half	\$1057.5" x 4.75"
1/4 Page (Vertical Only)	\$553.75" x 4.25"
1/8 Page (Business Card)	\$30	.. 3.625" x 2.25" (horizontal only)

Ask about discounts for multi-month or annual ad contracts.

Payment for ads is due on the 10th of the month. If not received by the following 10th of the month, the person will be listed on the RMDS website under the suspended category.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Articles submitted for publication will not be returned. Please contact the editor before submitting unsolicited articles or photos. Articles represent the work and views of their authors, and not necessarily the RMDS, its officers or employees.

Utilize the RMDS Network:

Trainers and Instructors - Get on the Web and Build New Business

If you wish to increase business, you can place your information on the RMDS website at very low cost. Send information to: RMDS Central Office, 2942 Park Lake Dr, Boulder, CO 80301, Phone 720.890.7825, or email: rmds@rmds.org (note on subject line "Trainer Info".) Please include your name, phone, postal address, email, training locations and other pertinent info, i.e. award, certifications, lesson types, schooling horses, etc.

The website averages 200 hits per month on the trainer page and RMDS receives 25-30 emails per month requesting names of trainers in the RMDS region. Don't miss the opportunity to expand your client base and gain recognition.

Cost is \$50 annually. Mail check to: RMDS Central Office, 2942 Park Lake Drive. Boulder, CO 80301.

Advertise Events on the RMDS Website

Website ads on the RMDS site provide your event with high visibility. Your ad will run for one month from the date it first appears. Unless the RMDS Central Office is notified in advance (rmds@rmds.org), the ad will be removed from the website once the date of the event advertised has passed.

Please limit content of the ad to 20 words. Your email and website addresses will be displayed as links.

Because of the implicit connection to the RMDS, we reserve the rights to:

- Refuse any ad.
- Edit ad content.
- Limit the number of ads displayed at any one time.

Important Info on RMDS membership

Awards are based on the information on your membership card. Be sure to double-check everything very carefully.

Duplicate cards are available for \$2.00. If emailed to you, they are free. Request a new one by mailing the Central Office at rmds@rmds.org.

Proof of adult amateur status must be sent to the Central Office every year. Showing proof at shows is not enough for the year-end awards. Owner, rider, and horse MUST be current members PRIOR to any ride for the score to count towards qualifying for RMDS Championships and for qualifying for any year-end award. If PONY is not listed under breed and you have a pony, send a copy of the measurement form or the permanent pony card to the Central Office. Remember, membership and its details are your responsibility. Be sure corrections are made.

About RMDS

Technical Delegates, Judges, and Certified Instructors Dressage Judge Ratings and Levels Qualified to Judge

Any class ridden before a judge not qualified to judge at that level must ride "Hors d'concours" where the score does not count.

Status	Status	Levels	Status	Status	Levels
"L"	Learner*	Training - Second (RMDS only)	"S"	Senior	All
"I"	Recorded	Training - Second	"I"	International	All
"R"	Registered	Training - Fourth	"O"	Olympic	All

*may only judge at RMDS recognized shows.

FEI 'I'

Janet Foy 719-260-1566

USEF 'S'

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez 303-642-7708
Sandra Hotz 303-817-2030
Anita Owen 303-953-9904
Janet "Dolly" Hannon 303-919-4112

USEF 'R'

Kristi Wysocki 303-648-9877

USEF 'r'

Loni Gaudet 970-532-0852
Amy Jablonovsky 970-493-2833
Suzanne Zimmer 303-478-8325

USDF 'L' Graduates (Schooling and RMDS

Only recognized shows)

Simone Ahern-Harless* 719-749-9274
Barbara Bell (WY) 307-548-7079
Gigi Brittain* 303-646-1506
Julie Burt 719-372-6270
Alison Child* (UT) 435-640-3287
Rae Ann Cook* 970-225-1408
Marti Foster* 303-277-1132
Beth Geier 303-673-9840

Jan Goodrich-Spear 303-664-0152
Gwen Ka'awaloa* 303-646-4363
Linda Coates-Markle 303-469-0279
Sarah Martin* 719-379-3716
Kathleen Mayger* 970-310-8729
Linda Ohlson-Gross* 303-840-9818
KC Parkins-Kyle 303-841-9953
Kathy Simard* 720-981-4448
Maria Wasson 303-682-9594
Simone Windeler 719-540-2000

*Denotes Graduation with Distinction

Dressage Sport Horse Breeding Judges

Janet Foy 'R' 719-260-1566
Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez "R" 303-642-7708
Kristi Wysocki 'r' 303-648-9877

Technical Delegates USEF

Eva-Maria Adolphi (UT), r 801-254-3247
Rusty Cook (NM), r 505-877-1456
Veronica Holt, R 303-646-3829
Laurie Mactavish, R 970-390-5160
Heather Petersen, r 719-683-8435
Deeda Randle (WY), R 307-638-6737
Catherine Siemiet, r 719-942-5311
Dianne Stanley (MT), r 406-652-4061
Libby Stokes, r 303-688-2795

TD, RMDS sanctioned shows only

Joan Clay 970-420-0887
Jeannette Hillery 303-494-7718
Susan Selby 970-227-9530
M. Elaine Thomas 719-495-1510

USDF Certified Instructors

Training - Second

Julie Burt 719-372-6270
Jill Cantor Lee 970-686-9163
RaeAnn Cook 970-225-1408
Janet "Dolly" Hannon 303-279-4546
Sabine Kallas 307-733-9497
Ellene Kloepfer 303-828-3879
Clayton Martin 719-379-3716
Sheri Mattei-Mead 970-669-3733
Kathryn Meistrell 303-550-5130
Bridget Milnes 303-660-4986
Kristi Wysocki 303-648-9877

Training - Fourth

Simone Ahern-Harless 719-749-9274
Nancy DeVaney 303-681-2516
Loma Fowler 303-841-0417
Sarah Martin 719-379-3716
Kathy Simard 720-981-4448
Melinda Weatherford 970-484-5218

Roster 2009 Corrections

Phone Number Change:

Grace Maddox 720-320-8857

Address Change:

Kathy Layton 7750 Preservation Trail, Parker, CO 80134
Sandi Rosewell 640 Gooseberry Drive #404 Longmont, CO 80503
Mandy Shepard 1850 S. Ulster Street Denver, CO 80204

Add:

Debra Frank 2208 Clermont Street Denver, CO 80207 303-355-2288
Libby Stokes 1393 Mesa Ridge Lane, Castle Rock, CO 80108-9336 303-688-2795

LAS VEGAS - A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

-Jessica Ransehausen, FEI "I" Judge

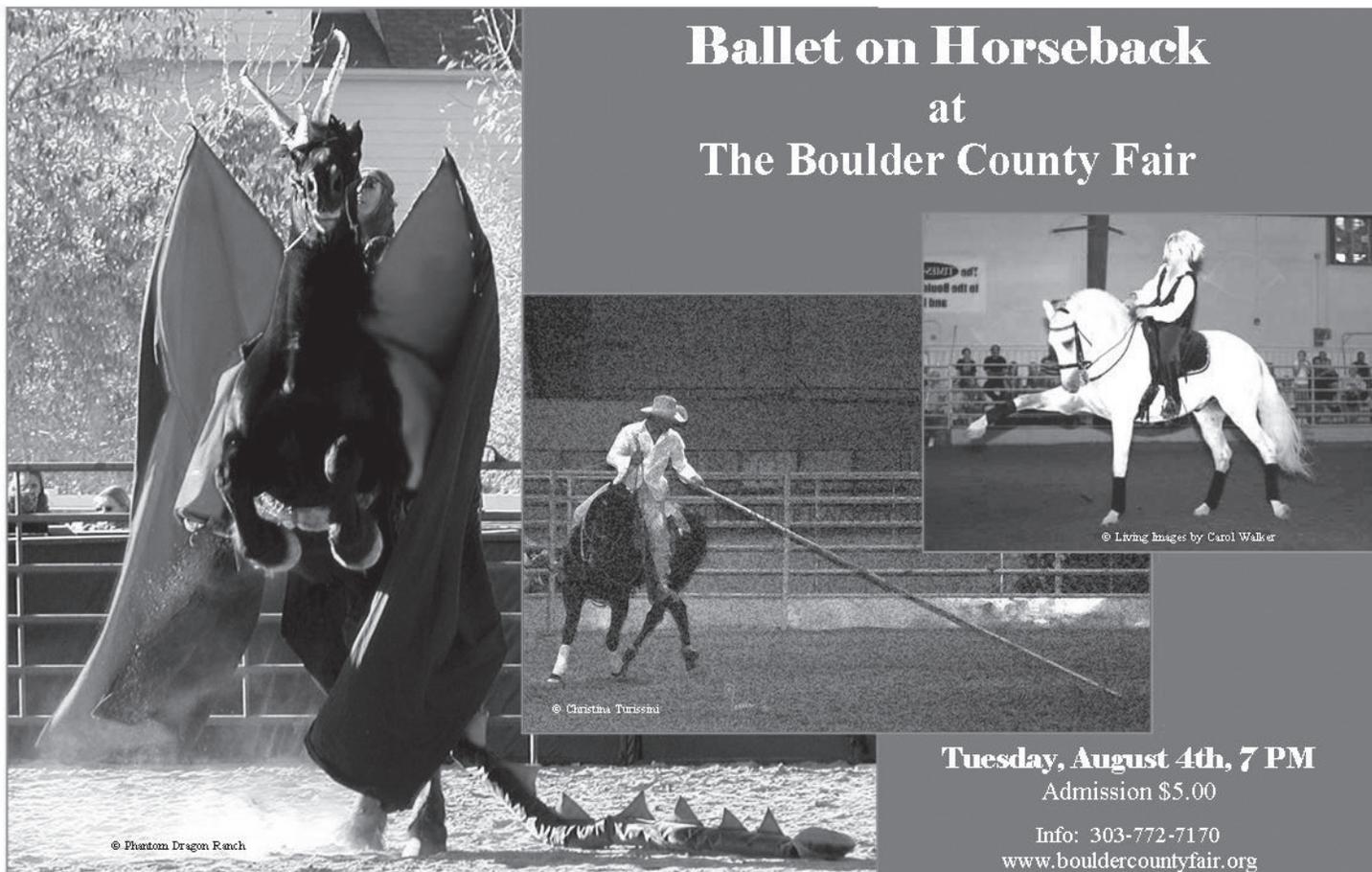
The Dressage World Cup Final this year in Las Vegas was fun, interesting, and beautifully produced. Las Vegas is such an extraordinary place. The casinos are huge, and make every effort to make people feel comfortable and play at the games! Right away it is clear that time is not important! There are no windows or clocks to remind tourists of the passing of time. You can find restaurants of all kinds under the same roof, along with fantastic entertainment. The Dressage World Cup Final had the same kind of excitement. Between the competitions there were light shows, acrobatic performances, and popular singers; just a great background for dressage and stadium jumping. But even with all of the hoopla, we witnessed judging that was refreshing and showed an honesty that needs to be recognized and applauded.

The riders' performances were certainly equal to the entertainment level. We all sat back in our seats in the wonderful Thomas & Mack Arena and enjoyed the show! The spectators were very knowledgeable, and with the stadium mostly sold

out, the atmosphere was quite electric. But all of this marvelous production didn't distract from the very important issue of the judging, which deserves some reflection.

When a performance is evaluated by subjective judging, questions always arise in one's mind about just how that judge came to the conclusion to award a specific score. And when the scores just don't seem to be justified by the performance, the spectators ask why, and riders become frustrated. The more educated the public, the better the judges and judging must be. The "results of competition in dressage are so dependent upon the judges' interpretation of what they see at the moment" -- let's hold on to that phrase, it's going to be important. At major competitions, like CDI***, CDI**** and CDI***** and CDIO, a panel of at least five judges should insure that the outcome is accurate. Yet, with the results of some past major competitions, one begins to wonder if this is true. It appears that the pressure is greater for the sameness of a score rather than the correctness, and the judges rely on the reputation

Cont'd on page 18



Ballet on Horseback
at
The Boulder County Fair

© Phantom Dragon Ranch

© Christina Turicini

© Living Images by Carol Walker

Tuesday, August 4th, 7 PM
Admission \$5.00
Info: 303-772-7170
www.bouldercountyfair.org

About RMDS

Omnibus 2009 Corrections

- Page C-6 August 21, 22
Utah Dressage Society Shows I and II
New show manager: Sue Jero 801-254-9107 sjero@aol.com
New secretary: Kay Van Patter 801-968-8277 vanpatterkay@aol.com
- Page C-29 Boulder Valley Dressage
August 30 Show, Open: July 30, Closes: August 20
- Page C-53 Wasatch Back Dressage Festival-moved to Salt Lake Events Center-Jordan, UT
- Page C-55 New Address: Simone Windeler
19525 Twisted Pine Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80908
- Page C-59 and C-60 Add: Autumn Hill IV is a Qualifying Event for Great American/USDFBC Rocky Mountain Series Finals. Additional Sport Horse classes: July 26, Sunday afternoon
Sport Horse Judge: Kristi Wysocki (DSHB), Elbert, CO
- Young Horse/Sport Horse Classes:**
Class 1: Fillies of 2009, with or without dam, foals only to be judged
Class 2: Yearling Fillies (born in 2008)
Class 3: Two Year old Fillies (born in 2007)
Class 4: Three Year old Fillies (born in 2006)
Class 5: Filly Champion / Great American / USDFBC Qualifier – 1st two places from Classes 1, 2, 3, 4 (no class fee)
Class 6: Colts of 2009, with or without dam, foals only to be judged
Class 7: Yearling Colts and Geldings (born in 2008)
Class 8: Two Year old Colts and Geldings (born in 2007)
Class 9: Three Year Old Colts and Geldings (born in 2006)
Class 10: Colt Champion / Great American / USDFBC Qualifier – 1st two places from classes 6, 7, 8, 9 (no class fee)
- Mature Horse/Breeding Classes:**
Class 12: Four Year Old and Older Broodmares with or without foals (mares only to be judged)
Class 13: Four Year Old and Older Maiden and Yeld Mares (not nursing or currently in foal)
Class 14: Champion Mare / Great American / USDFBC Qualifier – 1st two places from classes 12, 13 (no class fee)
Class 15: Four Year Old and Older Stallions
Class 16: Champion Stallion / Great American / USDFBC Qualifier – 1st two places from class 15 (no class fee)

2009 Shows and Events

All shows are RMDS recognized except schooling shows. JULY 2009

- 7 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/
- 8 **Ballet on Horseback to Benefit Medicine Horse Program, Boulder**
Contact: 720-406-7630, www.medicinehorse.org
- 10 **Wasatch Back Dressage Festival I, Jordan, UT, USEF**
Contact Alison Child, 435-640-3287, achild@kirwin.com
- 10-11 **USDF Youth Competition & USDF Adult Competition, Autumn Hill Farm-Longmont**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033
jbarringerichers@comcast.net
- 11 **Wasatch Back Dressage Festival II, Jordan, UT, USEF**
Contact Alison Child, 435-640-3287, achild@kirwin.com
- 11 **Whispering Winds Schooling Show #3, Monument**
Contact Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040, wjsimone@msn.com
- 12 **Autumn Hill Sunday Series #2-Longmont**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033
jbarringerichers@comcast.net
- 17 **Dressage at the Peak Summer Warm-up-Colorado Springs-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 18-19 **Dressage at the Peak II Summer-Colorado Springs-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 21 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/
- 22-26 **NAJYRC-Kentucky Horse Park**
Contact Susan Rudman, 303-697-8528, sewrunred@msn.com
- 25 **Autumn Hill Dressage Festival III-Longmont, CO, USEF**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033
jbarringerichers@comcast.net
- 26 **Autumn Hill Dressage Festival IV-Longmont, CO, USEF-BREED**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033
jbarringerichers@comcast.net
- 31 **Dressage in the Rockies #1-Parker, CO-USEF**
Contact Glenda McElroy, 818-841-3554

AUGUST 2009

- 1 **Dressage in the Rockies #2-Parker, CO-USEF-BREED**
Contact Glenda McElroy 818-841-3554
- 1 **Sage Creek Dressage #3-UT-USEF**
Contact Jennifer Layman, 435-901-3480
- 1-2 **Cheyenne Dressage & Eventing Club Open Dressage Show-Cheyenne-USEF**
Contact Rowena Heckert-307-632-4151, rlheckert@msn.com
- 1-2 **Cottonwood Dressage I, Bozeman, MT**
Contact Deborah McCabe, 406-600-1754, dtowers@cbscorp.com
- 2 **Dressage in the Rockies #3-Parker, CO-USEF**
Contact Glenda McElroy 818-841-3554
- 2 **Sage Creek Dressage #4-UT-USEF**
Contact Jennifer Layman, 435-901-3480
- 4 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/
- 4 **Ballet on Horseback at the Boulder County Fair, Longmont**
Contact: 303-077-2717, www.bouldercountyfair.org

- 8 **Whispering Winds Schooling Show #4, Monument**
Contact Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040, wjsimone@msn.com
- 9 **Centaur Rising Dressage Show II-Pine, CO**
Contact Kristann Cooper, 303-838-5086, kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 15-16 **Dressage at Sun Prairie-Peyton, CO-USEF**
Contact Camille Griffin, 719-488-2812, camillegriffin@msn.com
- 15-16 **Jan Ebeling Clinic, Ft Collins Equestrian Center**
Contact Laura Speer, 970-371-2934
- 16 **Autumn Hill Sunday Series #3-Longmont**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033
jbarringerichers@comcast.net
- 18 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/
- 21 **Paragon Dressage I- -Estes Park-USEF-BREED**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 22 **Paragon Dressage II- Estes Park-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 22 **Utah Dressage Society Show #1-Saratoga Springs, UT-USEF**
Contact Eva-Marie Adolphi, 801-254-3247, adolphi@redrock.net
- 23 **Utah Dressage Society Show #2-Saratoga Springs, UT-USEF**
Contact Eva-Marie Adolphi, 801-254-3247, adolphi@redrock.net
- 23 **Paragon Dressage III- Estes Park-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 27 **Walk in the Park I- Colorado Horse Park, Parker-USEF**
Contact Veronica Holt, 303-646-3829, veronicaholt@q.com
- 28 **Walk in the Park II- Colorado Horse Park, Parker-USEF**
Contact Veronica Holt, 303-646-3829, veronicaholt@q.com
- 29 **CSDA Fall Schooling Show-Colorado Springs-Whispering Winds-Monument**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 30 **CSDA Fall Show-Colorado Springs-Whispering Winds-Monument**
Contact Simone Windeler, 719-540-2000, wjsimone@msn.com
- 30 **Boulder Valley So Long to Summer Show-Longmont**
Contact Beth Geier, 303-673-9840

SEPTEMBER 2009

- 1 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/
- 5-6 **Paul Belasik Clinic, 8th Heaven Farms, Castle Rock**
Contact Beverly Swanson, 303-688-5727
eighthheavenhorses@yahoo.com
- 5-6 **Grand Valley Dressage Fall Show & Western Slope Champs-USEF**
Contact Kathy Sassano, 970-245-0806
- 13 **Foothills 'Last Chance' Dressage Show-Golden**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 15 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/
- 24 **Rocky Mountain Sport Horse Breeding Championships & Qualifying Open Breed Show-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 25-27 **RMDS Championships and Open Show -Parker-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net

2009 Shows and Events

29 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

OCTOBER 2009

3-4 **Millbrook Farms Fall Show**
Contact Jan Lawrence, 801-768-8739

6 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

10-11 **RMDS Continuing Education with Lendon Gray,**
Instructors, riders, and auditors welcome. Somerset Farms, Longmont
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

16-18 **Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional
Dressage Championship-Albuquerque, NM USEF**

17-18 **Fall Harvest Schooling Show-Grand Junction**
Contact Kathy Sassano, 970-245-0806

20 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

NOVEMBER 2009

3 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

14 **RMDS Board of Governors' Meeting, Colorado Springs**

17 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

DECEMBER 2009

8 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

29 **Janet Foy Clinic, Reiterhof Ranch, Franktown**
Contact Jody, 303-646-9520, www.geocities.com/ingolfn/

JANUARY 2010

30 **RMDS Judges' Continuing Education, Janet "Dolly" Hannon,**
Location TBA.
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

MARCH 2010

12-14 **Rocky Mountain Horse Expo, Denver, CO**

MAY 2010

15-16 **RMDS L-Program D2 Session, Somerset Farms, Longmont**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

JUNE 2010

19-20 **Dressage Through the Levels-Steffan Peters & Janet Foy**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

JULY 2010

24-25 **RMDS L-Program Final Session, Autumn Hill IEC, Longmont**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

AUGUST 2010

20-22 **Paragon Dressage Shows I, II, III, Estes Park, CDI****
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

SEPTEMBER 2010

1 **Rocky Mountain Sport Horse Breeding Championships & Qualifying
Open Breed Show, Colorado Horse Park, Parker - USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwgw.net

2-5 **RMDS Championships and Open Show, Colorado Horse Park,
Parker - USEF**
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and past performance of a rider rather than what they see on competition day.

As an FEI "1" judge, I have watched with interest, the abolition of the FEI Dressage Committee and the formation of the Dressage Task Force. After the Hong Kong Olympics, this Task Force was directed to review all aspects of the dressage discipline, including judging. There are two sides to the judging issues: the educational preparation, and the actual performance of the judges at the major competitions.

Katerina Wuest, a German judge who is also a member of the Task Force, is heading up the judging issues. Letters are flowing between FEI judges and Katerina concerning judging and other issues, such as the size of the Olympic teams, etc. Questions are being asked as to whether we should go back to having four members on a team, with one drop score, but that's another topic.

One major issue that has surfaced in the discussions is the education of the judges. Stephen Clark, (British O judge) provided excellent input concerning the educational side of FEI judges. I agree with him, and most of our American judges, that our national judges' program is probably the best in the world. Our US judges' program demands that the judge is proficient as a rider at our different national levels, and the progression from "L" (learner) judge, through small r and large R, and finally to "S" (senior) judge takes time. There are no short cuts! This program gives our judges a rounded education. Once a Senior judge makes the transition to an FEI judge, the continuing education seminars are very informative and stimulating. They are run with excellent discussion and freedom to express individual views.

There seems to be a political influence that has created a disparity between what the judges see in a given test, and how the ride is actually scored.

We hear a lot through the press and also from knowledgeable spectators about the political side of judging that occurs at big international competitions such as the World Equestrian Games and Olympic Games. There seems to be a political influence that has created a disparity between what the judges see in a given test and how the ride is actually scored. I think the feeling is that there are two levels of major importance at these big international competitions. The highest level consists of the nations of Germany and Holland. These riders seem to be immune from the critical scrutiny the rest of the world has to face. The second level consists of the riders from all other nations.

Let me give you an example of this: let's take a look at the Dutch rider Anky Van Grusven's performance in Athens with Salinero in the Grand Prix, and then Isabell Worth's ride in Hong Kong.

In the Grand Prix, Anky's entry was not quite straight; the halt was never established and was slightly off the centerline. The first extended trot did not show enough suspension, the horse

ran with his nose slightly behind the vertical; in the first trot half pass the haunches were trailing slightly. The first piaffe was not centered over the centerline, the steps, at first, not very regular and he never stayed on the place. The regularity improved towards the end. The extended walk was disappointing, the horse did not stretch over the top line at all, and the steps got hurried and quick toward the end. The second piaffe was again not on the place nor correctly placed on the centerline. The passage was at times not straight. After the canter depart, the canter stride was tense and did not show much ground cover. Salerino spooked as he approached the centerline for the zigzag half passes, therefore, the movement did not start on the centerline. The extended canter was disappointing because the tension caused the strides to be quick. The series of flying changes were clean. The pirouette to the right did not start on the centerline – the horse then spooked and crouched close to the ground with the front legs extended, and spun around through the rest of the pirouette. The left pirouette was better, but too big because the horse stepped out too far to the right with right hind leg. The last centerline with piaffe and passage looked the best and the final halt was much better than the first. It is true that Salinero was very active and powerful, but power is only good if it is harnessed in a proper way to show harmony and suppleness, with enough relaxation to allow the activity to travel from behind, over the back, and into a steady contact. With all these problems and the tension that this horse showed through the movements of the test, it is difficult to believe this horse could have finished with a score higher than a 66% or 67%. The tension along with some disobedience should have been reflected in the actual movement scores as well in the general impressions found in the collective marks. So how was it possible that this ride earned a score of 74.2%?

I was not in Hong Kong, but the TV coverage showed Isabel's two major resistances quite clearly and one wonders if these things would have been so easily overlooked in riders from other nations. In Hong Kong, the problems actually started in the Grand Prix when Satchmo kicked out behind at Isabell's spur in the last few steps of the piaffe. It is also interesting that he traveled on a single track behind in the piaffe. He continued with this problem in all three performances. In the Special, the horse starts the piaffe with about 8 steps and then hesitates, throws his head down and violently backs up. As Isabell pushes him forward, he bucks and finally plunges forward and continues into the passage and the rest of the test. After that, both of his canter pirouettes are too big.

In her third ride, the Freestyle, Isabell rides a pirouette in the piaffe. The horse makes the first six steps, and then suddenly backs up three steps, throwing his head down, and jumping sideways. He finally jumps forward into the passage and continues on with the Freestyle. These resistances are so similar in the Special and the Freestyle, that it must be something this horse has done many times before. How could this ride have

been awarded an Individual Silver Medal?!

Now let's take the Dressage World Cup Final in Las Vegas where the results were like a breath of fresh air! Most people, and knowledgeable ones at that, predicted that Isabell would win. This point of view clearly stems from previous competitions where Isabell could do no wrong, or at least her mistakes were easily forgiven. Even though Anky did not qualify with Salinero, she decided to come to Las Vegas. She is always happy to participate, even if it happens with her second horse "Painted Black," instead of her best horse.

Let's look at the rides in Las Vegas. When we look at the Grand Prix, Isabell was surprisingly unfocused. She incorrectly counted the strides in the canter zigzag, putting in one at 7 strides rather than the required 6 strides. She also was annoyed with the people filming the tests behind the corner near A. She definitely had a problem with her first canter pirouette when Satchmo dropped out of the canter. Altogether the test was conservative and uninteresting. Satchmo is very base narrow when performing the passage and piaffe. He often steps with the left hind leg to the right, in front of the right hind. There is a wonderful movement that he does do well. He makes beautiful half passes in the trot. He has enormous freedom in the shoulders and shows wonderful expression. Isabell came in 3rd in the Grand Prix with all four of the judges in agreement.

In the Grand Prix, Steffen rode a beautiful test with great expression, especially in the piaffe and canter pirouettes, because Ravel can sit and carry his weight easily behind. He showed great freedom and scope in his trot half passes. It was a really fluid test with no mistakes!

Anky, on the other hand, had some mistakes in the flying changes every second stride but overall the horse gave a good, active performance in the Grand Prix. So the result of the Grand Prix was very refreshing for everyone. Steffen was first, Anky was second and Isabell was third. With such a rewarding win for Steffen in the Grand Prix the atmosphere was electric for Saturday night's freestyle.

Isabell was the first to ride of the 3 highest riders. She knew she had a job to do to win. I think she thought her strength rested on her great ability to ride the technical side of the freestyle. She showed many difficult combinations, including extended canter to pirouettes, and flying changes to pirouette. Her half passes in the trot were wonderful and she probably earned 10 points on her trot half pass to the left. But, unfortunately, she had two mistakes in the flying changes every second stride, behind, on the circle.

Steffen then rode his freestyle and everyone held their breath. This ride was a confirmation of the Grand Prix two days before. Ravel showed smooth transitions and wonderful piaffe and canter pirouettes with great engagement and carrying power. The freestyle showed a great degree of difficulty with no mistakes. Steffen and Ravel are so harmonious together. They have a true partnership – no subservience on the horse's part, just a happy, elastic, horse. The horse is ridden with real swing from behind over the back and into a quiet contact, remaining

uphill. It is wonderful to see how quiet and low Steffen's hands remain even through the most difficult movements in the test.

So, the results show that all the judges were in good agreement over all. Mistakes were not forgiven and Linda Zang and Wim Ernes were brave to see the finer points in this competition. They saw top riders riding their best, but when it came down to the wire, Steffen showed the closest to the dressage ideal of precise figures shown with good energy and impulsion, never losing fluidity, suppleness, and with a wonderful degree of harmony between rider and horse. Too often energy and brilliance brings out too much tension so the ultimate harmony and suppleness is lost.

Las Vegas is definitely a breath of fresh air because everyone except Isabell thought the outcome was fair. Isabell showed bad sportsmanship, especially during the press conference, she felt entitled to win no matter what. After all she has a background of being rewarded when it was not deserved and she expects that entitlement to continue.

Are we not tired of having the team Gold and Silver medals decided before the Olympics? The FEI has a group of excellent judges with great experience, but what happens when the ground jury gets to the WEG or the Olympics? What happens to judging fairly and without bias? Judging what is seen at the moment! It is not that a movement that is incorrectly ridden is not penalized, but rather this penalty is not carried through into the general impressions, under submission and use of the rider's aids. Do we have to go to outside mandatory deductions? What would Isabell's score look like if an automatic deduction of, let's say 5 points for a halting in a movement and a deduction of 10 points for a disobedience such as backing up in the test? These could be introduced if the judges do not recognize the importance of point deductions not only at the time of the movement but also at the end of the test. Having to resort to this method would be unfortunate! Do we really want to take these decisions out of the hands of the judges?

What keeps judges from judging what they see on a given day? Good horses and good riders have bad performances. I like Anky's reply at the press conference in Las Vegas. She said that Steffen's win was good for the sport and she smiled and said "you win some and lose some" and Steffen was the best! That is good sportsmanship and it comes from a rider who is used to having good scores even when, as in Athens, many issues in her performance were downplayed.

Our sport of Dressage could be much more exciting at the WEG and Olympic level if the scores reflected what was really happening in the arena on the day. That is why Las Vegas was a truly exciting example of good, honest judging with the correct outcome.

Most nations know that the only team and individual medal that riders work hard to qualify and compete for, is the Bronze. Let us all work hard to keep this problem from happening again. The judging record in the past has not helped promote our sport to the general public and the press. Las Vegas could be used as a shining example of how to correct this problem.



RMDS Membership Form

RMDS is a USDF Group Member Organization. All members are automatically USDF Group Members.

Individual Membership - \$55.00 (October December) **(\$60 after January 1)**

Additional family members (same address) - \$40

Business Memberships- \$75.00 Centaur newsletter only - \$35.00 Life Membership - \$650.00

All business memberships include one individual membership.

Please include all information for person designated as individual member. *If an adult amateur, include current copy of USEF card.*

All individual members will receive Centaur newsletter & the Omnibus.

Indicate Local Chapter (only one):

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Names, DOBs, & USDF #s of additional family members _____

I pledge \$ _____ to go towards the RMDS pledge to the USDF Capital Campaign. (Include amount with your membership check)

Type of Membership: (check one) Individual Business Family Centaur Only

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Horse Registration Form

→ Horses must be registered with RMDS to be eligible for year-end awards and for horse-of-the year award.

→ Eligibility starts on the date the envelope containing this form and check is postmarked.

→ **The name & all information on this registration must be the same as that used on horse show entry forms.**

Lifetime Horse Registration Fee - \$40.00 Changes (i.e., owner or horse's name) \$15.00

Horse Name _____ Sex _____

Breed (if known) _____ Registration No. (include copy of papers) _____
(list grade if no registry papers available.)

Owner Name(s) (one owner must be an RMDS member) _____

Address of Owner _____

Owner's Phone (Home) _____ (E-Mail) _____

Name of Representative (If owner is a business) _____

Membership & horse registration acknowledged via postcard. Mail completed form with check made payable to RMDS
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CLOSES: JUNE 26, 2009

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Secretary/Manager: Beth Geier-2942 Park Lake Dr.-Boulder, CO 80301-720-890-7825 bethgeier1@comcast.net
Show Grounds Contact: Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033, jbarringerrichers@comcast.net

***YOUTH --21 years or under—Your age is determined by the age you turn within the year 2009.
ADULT—22 years old or older within the year 2009.***

→YOUTH RIDERS: You will be put on a scramble team with 2-3 other Youth riders. Each team member will ride the test of their choice, an equitation class and you will also complete a written test appropriate to the riders age. Study guides will be provided. Pick your test from this list:

Class #	Class Description	Class #	Description
1 J	USDF Intro B	8 J	Second Level Test 1
2 J	Training Level Test 1	9 J	Second Level Test 2
3 J	Training Level Test 2	10 J	Second Level Test 4
4 J	Training Level Test 4	11 J	Third Level TOC
5 J	First Level Test 1	12 J	Fourth Level TOC
6 J	First Level Test 2	13 J	FEI TOC
7 J	First Level Test 4		

→ADULT RIDERS: You will be put on a scramble team with 2-3 other Adult riders. Each team member will ride two tests of their choice. You will also complete a written test. A study guide will be provided. **Pick any two tests from any level or adjoining levels → USDF Walk/Trot plus all USEF tests and all FEI tests.**

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Call For Centaur Articles

Do you love to write? See your byline in the Centaur! Give back to the dressage community and share your enthusiasm through informative articles.

Do you have a specialty the rest of the community would benefit in knowing about? We want to know!

Contact: Cathy Van Berg, Centaur Editor at vanbergc@yahoo.com

Photographs are always welcome!

August Topics: **Summer with RMDS**
Shows, Clinics, Activities

September Topics: **RMDS Chapter Appreciation**
What's great about your GMO and local Chapter?

October Topics: **Training, Training, Training**

November Topics: **Horse Health**

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"Gigi rode with me while we were both based in Wellington, Florida. She has an incredible rapport with horses and an innate ability to tap into their strengths and weaknesses. She's consistent and fair, and produces positive results very quickly. Gigi is also an elegant rider, and shows a horse off to its fullest potential. I highly recommend her training and teaching skills." -Sue Blinks

Para Dressage Dream Update

-Caryn Malone, Para Equestrian

I've experienced heartbreak and unbelievable acts of kindness! It is amazing how the world goes round. Usually we are onlookers. Sometimes we wish we could be in the thick of it, and sometimes we are thankful and relieved we are standing on the sidelines!

Some of you know that I have been working tirelessly trying to qualify for the selection trials for the Para Dressage team World Equestrian Games. My fabulous horse, Cecil, has been right there with me. In only two months as teammates, we have been to countless lessons with Dolly Hannon, been to two shows, not to mention all the work done here at home. The shows were successful in that we managed some great scores that qualified us to go to Lamplight and compete for both a spot in the selection trials, and for the Para Dressage National Championships.

people I work for and who live on the property, Jan and Clyde Canino, also offered to help in any way they could. My roommate/helper was also taking on much responsibility. Great!

Next obstacle: MONEY. While our fund-raiser was successful, it was not quite enough to get us to Lamplight. There were still expenses that needed to be covered. I was really stressing over this! Out of the blue, a thoughtful and caring man named Joe Skelton called and we chatted about the Lions Club he belonged to, and a place called Ensign Skills Center. Ensign works closely with persons with Low Vision. Joe got on the phone and talked with the Director of Ensign as well as the Lions Club. To my complete amazement, relief, and jubilation, I was given \$1000 to complete my trip. Just unbelievable kindness.



Now the trick was getting there. My grandparents were generous enough to give me a truck to use to pull the trailer that was loaned to me by Cecil's owner (Joan Clay). Michael (my "superboyfriend") and I made a one day trip of 6 hours one way to get the truck. That was a successful trip. Then the truck had a minor overhaul and a hitch put on to get it ready to go.

The next thing to do was to make sure all was going to be taken care of while I was away; I do still have horses I am leaving behind. My two stellar clients, Jeanette Hillery and Gayle Udall offered to help with feedings and lunging. Perhaps this was to make sure their horses got fed. The two wonderful

Things are all set. The dogs are coming with me, we are camping out in Joan Clay's/Cecil's trailer (Joan is a first class person, and I am lucky to know her!). I have the chores covered and we are on our way!

The plan is to leave Sunday afternoon, have one stop-over, and get to Lamplight Monday evening.

TRAGEDY! Saturday afternoon Cecil is in the corner of his pen pawing. This can sometimes be his way of wanting attention, or it could be distress. As soon as I walked into his pen, I knew it was the latter.

So we walk. The vet was attending to a colic before he got to us. I've always hated standing in line, but this one took the cake! We waited for an hour and a half.

In that time we walked and walked and walked. Cecil also had banamine on board. "Please kick in, please kick in," I kept saying to myself. "Please please please please please kick in."

After about an hour, Cecil started nibbling on grass. OK, this is good. But we kept walking. By the time my vet got there, Cecil seemed mostly better. He was dragging me around looking for grass to eat. Back to his rude self. However, my vet and I decided we were still going to do a full work up.

There was still some gas, so the tube went in. Now Cecil is drug happy and lubed, back in his stall to wake up. Phew, dodged that one. Or did I?

After taking the truck and trailer for a test spin, I got back to find Cecil still standing in his pen looking not so good. His sides were visibly distended. So, in the trailer he went. Let's see if a good ole "ride in the trailer" trick will work. Nope, got worse, so off to CSU we went. Joan was also on her way.

He got the full work up. The prognosis was grim but hopeful. I left CSU around 7:30 pm just praying that he would be OK. At this point, I am slightly less than 7 days from competition. The USEF rule is no drugs within that time frame. So could we still go and compete? The phone text at 10:30 makes that a moot question; Cecil was headed to surgery.

Needless to say, this was the most devastating news I had ever heard. In such a short time, I fell so much in love with this horse. His life was on the line. I couldn't believe he was having to go through this! I thank my lucky stars (though I wondered if I had any left) that Cecil made it through surgery!

I decided to go to Lamplight and witness the first CPEDI*** ever in the US. I still refused to give up on this dream! I wanted to be riding in the World Equestrian Games! There was a possibility that I could get a horse to compete at Lamplight, and so many wonderful people offered me a horse, but none of them had a passport.

I watched all the Para riders in each of the three days of competition. I met the other athletes and Para staff. They were absolutely fabulous people! I learned so much about what the "O" judges are looking for as compared to the "S" judges I had ridden for. Sadly, I felt that Cecil was just as talented as any horse that was there competing. Sad, but good to know.

Dolly came with me, and roomed with me. Let me tell you, Dolly is a funny, classy, generous lady, and I am SO lucky to have her as my trainer and my friend! We watched and compared and learned so much. We now know how far we need to up the bar on our training.

NEW HORSE! Wow, I can't believe how lucky I am to have found a new horse so quickly. Kobe is the new guy, and he is wonderful. He is much like Cecil in many ways, but is also very different. I am again blessed to have met his owner, Fran McKenzie. She and Joan love their horses and want to watch them succeed. Their generosity is immeasurable!

There is another CPEDI*** in the works March 2010. I have every intention of being there! Cecil will hopefully be back to work in November. If I am able to find the funding, I would love to have two horses to compete.

The Para Equestrian division is in desperate need of so many things. Funding is number one, participants and horses are next on the list. The Europeans have been doing the Para Equestrian competitions for much longer than the US. Thus, it is difficult to compete with that. As we all know, the Europeans tend to have exceptional horses at their disposal.

With funding, we can send more athletes to international competitions. Education about the Para Equestrian sport can be given to those who are interested, as well as to staff members. This will be the first time EVER that Para Dressage is incorporated with the World Equestrian Games! That's a big deal, and we need to show we can compete with the rest of the world!

There is much that is needed to continue my quest, and help in any form is greatly appreciated! All donations are tax deductible, thanks to my nonprofit, the *US Association of Blind Athletes*, located right here in Colorado Springs.

I also have a website that has a "needs list." My goal for this website is for it to become the hub of information regarding Para Dressage. I want to get Therapeutic riding centers involved. I want equestrians with disabilities to realize they can take part in this fabulous sport! Please visit www.paradressedreams.org. It is still under construction (as my ideas are overflowing), but give feedback and ideas. Help me make this a dream that many can realize!

Are you a sidliner or a team player?
Keep the dream alive!

"...virtue shall be bound into the hair of thy forelock ... I have given thee the power of flight without wings."

The Koran

The Power of Confidence

-Renee Norcross, Parnter in WinQuest, a Company Promoting Unwavering Confidence from the Inside Out

***T*here is life within you, passion within you, and strength within you...**

...that has yet to be tapped. It is ready for you, welcoming you with open arms. What is that inner desire, goal or dream within?

Many riders have given up on realizing some of their goals and dreams because of fear, doubt or lack of self-confidence. This, of course, also limits many horse's from the opportunity to ride to their fullest potential.

Have you noticed with other riders, or perhaps even yourself, just at the most important moments, nervousness or anxiousness start to rear their ugly head? Riders may experience this when they are learning something new, getting out of their comfort zone, testing and showing, returning to riding after an accident, or coming back after many years of not riding. There are also riders who have had a horse show experience that was physically or emotionally painful or even traumatic. Without realizing it, some riders bring negative feelings from these past rides into new riding experiences. This awareness and greater understanding is powerful.

Dressage is unique and far more challenging sport than most because you are not interacting with an inanimate object that cannot think or feel. As you know, your horse feels every thought and feeling you have. When you are anxious about riding, your horse feels it and reads your emotional state as communication.

How the mind and body work is that when a rider is experiencing any fear-based emotion like nervousness, loss of control, doubt, anxiousness, or worry, it is impossible for the rider to simultaneously be in a state of confidence-based emotion such as certainty, self-trust, inner control, and inner power. Bottom line: if you are in a confident state you cannot also be in a state of fear or doubt.

Everybody wants confidence, yet so few people really understand the depth of confidence. Confidence is like success, once you have a taste of it, you want more and more, regardless of how successful you already are. Myth: those who need confidence are those who shut down mentally and are always nervous and doubtful. Truth: all riders, including Olympic dressage champions need and want more confidence. Truth: confidence is the most powerful mental skill any rider can possess. If you are riding well and are comfortable, the minute you take your riding to the next level you also require another level of confidence. Truth: just as you are unlimited in your potential, so is the power of self-confidence.

Confidence is the characteristic that separates good from great and ordinary from extraordinary. It fuels your energy and passion for riding. Confidence transports you beyond comfort

zones, empowering you to take action and achieve goals you never could before. Riding with confidence profoundly affects the mind and body - building trust, relaxation and effective communication between you and your horse.

Following is one simple and powerful exercise to take your self-trust and self-assurance to higher levels for more success and winning. Using your imagination, begin to create the riding experiences you desire. Your imagination is one of the gateways to build new programs into your subconscious.

Choose the area of riding you want to expand, or deepen your trust in your ability. Take control by making a committed decision to shift your self image from the old you to the new you – a highly confident rider.

Open up your imagination and picture your newly empowered self. What's different in how you sit on your horse? Are you more relaxed? How's your posture? Notice the change in how you hold the reins. As this new you, what does your trainer like about what you're doing in your lesson or in the show ring? How do you feel? How is your energy? What is your communication like with your horse? How does your horse respond to you feeling confident during your riding?

To move beyond the level of confidence you currently have and tap into your greatness even more, practice this visualization technique daily.

We'd like to close by giving you another strategy for changing your mind about who you were until reading this article, and support you in starting to form a new concept of YOU. Allow the following to become a script of power and positive inner change for you.

Deep within me is a passion and love for riding that nothing can take away. The joy and happiness I receive from riding far exceeds words. My horse and I are a marvelous team committed to taking one another to greater and greater heights. There is no stopping us; we are on a mission, a mission that allows us to soar beyond any insecurity, past barriers or limitations because we have a new level of confidence. I know that my renewed and increased self-belief and trust strengthens my horse's confidence, and both of us are happier. I have an important dream and vision to live into and today is my day to recommit to that dream, to myself and my riding partner. With our new mindset we are tension-free, strong, focused, sure of ourselves, powerful, calm, centered and ready to ride! Together we are a confident winning team - we can do this!

We wish you confidence and passion from the inside, out!

I am a Group Member of USDF Because...

- * Dressage education is delivered locally, and through my local group I can influence the national dressage scene
- * I receive the *USDF Connection*, USDF's monthly magazine
- * I am eligible to compete at USDF-recognized/USEF-licensed shows
- * I can earn awards through the USDF Rider Award Program
- * I earn USDF University Program credits and can present those as evidence of my continuing education for my license
- * I receive member discount rates for USDF events (Continuing Education Programs for Judges and USDF "L" Program Graduates; Adequan/USDF National Symposium; the Adequan/USDF Annual Convention; USDF Sport Horse Seminars; and the USDF Sport Horse Handlers Clinics)
- * My GMO can apply to The Dressage Foundation for a *Violet Hopkins Fund* grant or *Dancing Horse Fund* grant
- * If I am an adult amateur, I can apply for a *Carol Lavell Gifted™* grant for training through The Dressage Foundation
- * We can receive brochures on and USDF staff support for USDF Programs such as the "L" Program, Instructor Certification Workshops, and Adult Camps
- * I can ride in, or audit the USDF Adult Clinic series
- * I can ride in USDF Adult Team Competitions
- * I can participate in the GMO Points program to earn items for my GMO from USDF
- * I can receive RSS News feeds for news on any website participating with the USDF
- * I receive free brochures for USDF events
- * USDF staff provide high quality advertisements and press releases our GMO can use to reach more dressage enthusiasts
- * My GMO can receive educational and competition grants through our Region
- * I share my voice and my local experience in dressage with other dressage enthusiasts to guide dressage programs in the United States through my participation in the USDF convention

At the end of the day, the legacy of USDF educational programs and infrastructure can touch the lives of group members each time they ride in a clinic or lesson taught by a USDF Certified Instructor, or ride down centerline in front of an L graduate (who may have now advanced into the USEF dressage judging ranks). USDF is a national organization that draws attention to, and helps build interest in, dressage.

Group Members of USDF = strong GMOs and a strong national dressage investment



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Rider Fitness: Pilates Promotes Efficient Movement in Rider and Horses

Second of a Three Part Series

-Julia McSherry, Student of Fitness and Dressage

As Pilates instructor Georgia Burleson explained in her excellent article in last month's Centaur, Pilates was developed in the early 20th century by Joseph Pilates in Germany. Pilates focuses on the core postural muscles which help keep the body balanced and which are essential to providing support for the spine. Like yoga, Pilates exercises teach awareness of breath and alignment of the spine, and aim to strengthen the deep torso muscles. As a newcomer to utilizing Pilates and yoga to build core strength for riding dressage successfully, I have developed an understanding of the benefits of these disciplines in a short time because of the positive impact they have had on my position and riding.

Deb Elsner, an experienced trainer in dressage-based natural horsemanship, and Diana Landin, a Pilates instructor and neuromuscular therapist, both from Pine Junction, teamed together to design a clinic they call Essential Equus – mind and body (of horse and rider) working in harmony. The clinic is conducted in three parts. Part 1 includes specific Pilates exercises for riders on an exercise ball and roller. Part 2 teaches riders how to evaluate the movement of their horse for possible muscle tightness or injuries, and then teaches how to release the tension or find injury sites. The 3rd Part is done on horseback, and riders use muscle memory from the earlier Pilates exercises to elicit specific correct movements from their horses.

“...they will absolutely interfere with the horse's ability to perform if they block the potential for balanced work through their body...”

Having attended the Essential Equus clinic twice, I can attest that one can learn the muscles needed to post correctly by posting on the exercise ball. Working with the ball opens the hip, strengthens the glutes, and coordinates core posture to help eliminate bad habits that block your horse at the trot and canter.

Through the hip flexor stretch on an exercise roller, you can learn how to open and release hip flexors and lengthen the leg while not losing ribcage position.

“Sometimes it's hard to get people to buy into the concept until they try it,” says Deb, who is the mother of RMDS member and trainer Kim Elsner. “Through Pilates exercises, riders develop the fluidity and core strength needed to move in motion with the horse and ride with their bodies, not just their hands, allow-

ing the horse to come through,” she explains.

Exercises on the ball help the rider find and understand neutral spine and pelvis by rolling the ball forward, backward, left and right, as well as alternating seat bones forward and back to create a glide. It also helps the rider hold neutral spine while internally and externally rotating thighs. These movements build positional and postural awareness, and serve as a tool for identifying areas of immobility that block the horse from correctly engaging and using its top line. Learning neutral spine through a Pilates exercise ball is the foundation for learning to guide your horse with your seat instead of just your hands. With a strong core, the rider won't lean on the reins for support.

Posting on an exercise ball can help the rider learn the muscles needed to post correctly, open the hip, and understand an independent seat.

The horse movement evaluation and massage section of the clinic is important to improving the movement of both horse and rider, and complements the Pilates work. According to Deb, over 80% of the horses they have had for training have arrived with moderate to potentially serious physical problems. Most are relatively minor and resolve with consistent attention and awareness. “Issues can be from a variety of circumstances, but they will absolutely interfere with the horse's ability to perform if they block the potential for balanced work through their body,” she emphasizes.

If unbalanced or blocked, the horse might: speed up, refuse to do what we ask, do what appears to be the opposite of what we ask, buck, or rear. If the horse is stiff he might turn a physical issue into a mental or emotional issue. If balanced and supple, the horse will go forward; bend, flex, and move softly off the aids; and be engaged and relaxed.

It is important for dressage riders to have awareness of both their own body and that of their horse partner. Body work, like Pilates, yoga, and massage is important for efficient movement in both riders and horses. I particularly enjoy this clinic which combines rider Pilates work, horse body work, and riding, all in the same day. I might mention that it is fairly rigorous because you are learning to utilize muscles that may not have been engaged correctly before. But with improved rider position comes improved horse movement and the benefits are worth the effort.

To learn more about “neutral rider spine” and why it matters, as well as information on body work with horses, visit the Essential Equus web site at www.essentialequus.com.

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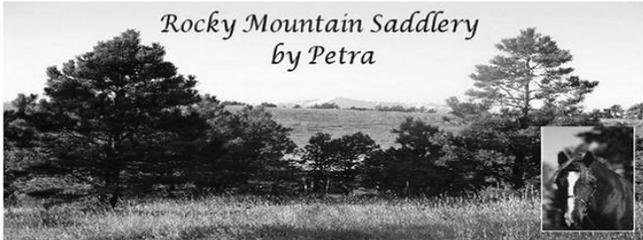
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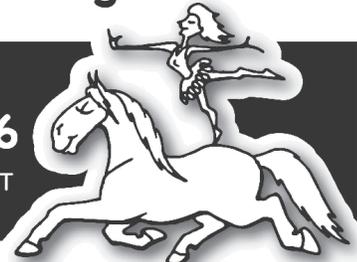
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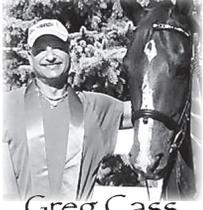
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