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Region 5 Team Competition

USDF Region 5 Youth and Adult Team Competition. Sunday June 29, 2014 at Tomora Training Center.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME --
BEGINNER TO ADVANCE!

This event provides an opportunity for youth and adults to compete in a team-like atmosphere, and encourages camaraderie and support for youth and adults competing at any level. USDF/USEF rules apply. Check the [website](#) for prizelist.

Call for 2014 Championships Sponsors

RMDS Championships depends on sponsors and advertisers to assist in defraying the cost of mounting our annual celebration.

Do you know someone who would be interested? Your barn, your local tack shop, a favorite vendor?

RMDS offers many levels of sponsorship participation!

Contact Beverly Swanson, RMDS Championship Show Liaison at ShowLiaisonRMDS@gmail.com for complete info packet, or check the website for info: [Championships Page](#)

2014 Jr/YR Camp Director Position

This position is open for bids. Please go to rmds.org for guidelines.

Members

View and print your membership card. Not a member yet? Join now.

[Click for Membership](#)

Calendar

See the upcoming USEF/RMDS Show Schedule, clinics, schooling shows and events.

[Click for Calendar](#)

Chapters

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

[Click for Chapters](#)

USDF Region 5

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

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

Marketplace

Our Marketplace advertisers support RMDS while promoting their businesses.

[Click for our advertisers](#)

Classified Ads

Clearing out your tack room? List your items in our classifieds, or see what is for sale.

[Click for Classifieds](#)

Advertise with us

RMDS has many print, show season, championship and online advertising opportunities to reach your targeted equine market.

[Click for Ad info](#)

Facebook

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

[Like us here](#)



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well here we are in June already.

Late winter storms kept us all busy in May cleaning up from the moisture as we celebrated the growth in our pastures. Our horses are enjoying the fresh green grass and their coats are shedding out and beginning to shine. Several RMDS members are welcoming new foals to their barns, the future dressage stars. I pray and hope for an uneventful season. Last year June brought many forest fires. With good management and some luck maybe the summer will be uneventful for Mother Nature.

We have several shows and clinics coming up, so check your calendar and plan on attending these events. Our Education Chairman Jon Haugen and Office Manager Beth Geier have been hard at work with the rest of our Committee Chairs to put together an outstanding educational year. Their hard work extends into 2015, so plan ahead as we are offering the membership opportunities to learn in various ways.

If you are questioning whether or not to attend an event, call the organizer and find out more about it. Auditing is often the best choice when you are not sure if you want to participate. Keep in mind most of the events sponsored by RMDS and its members have auditing available.

As we approach Summer, I am requesting that our members help us with sponsorships for the RMDS and Region 5 Championships in September. We can keep the costs of showing down by offsetting them with sponsorships. So jump in and call Show Committee Chair Bev Swanson to get a sponsorship packet and find some new sponsors. Members can also form a group to sponsor a class or other events during the show. Be creative and we can make the Chinese Year of the Horse a great one.

Keep an eye out on our website as the T-shirts for our Year of the Horse-themed championships will be available through our RMDS office. Some of the bigger shows will have the T-shirts available for purchase, as well.

I hope to see all of you at our RMDS events and at shows throughout the year. Please feel free to come and chat with me, I am your president and want to help every member to get the most from their participation in RMDS.

Aloha, Gwen Ka'awaloa

*Will is to Grace as the Horse is to the Rider
- Saint Augustine*

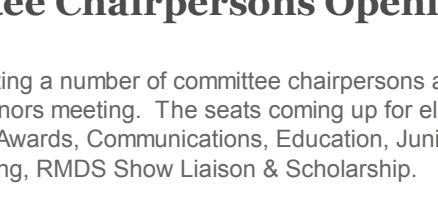
VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Show season is in full swing and I am so excited to see everyone! It seems as if life is always an exercise in balance. We need to be fully invested in our endeavors, yet when the result comes to fruition, it is best to let go of expectations, smile, and breathe. I hope we all can enjoy the show season this year. I am taking a break from showing this summer and having some foals from my favorite mares. I will be volunteering and helping at the shows, so if you see me, please stop me and let me know how you are doing, and how we can better serve you at the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society. I am always excited to meet fellow dressage enthusiasts. Dressage is best, when shared.

Best Regards, Aline Brandau, JD

Year of the Horse T-Shirts! On Sale Now

President Gwen K. has spearheaded getting T-Shirts printed with our "Year of the Horse" logo (art by Stephanie Gallegos). Shown here in black, they are also available in white with black print.



Get yours today! Just \$15 if you purchase at a show (we'll have a supply up at the CDI in Estes), or you can order one online from the [website](#) for \$15 +\$5 for shipping.

All proceeds go to RMDS Championships 2014 funding.

Committee Chairpersons Openings

We will be electing a number of committee chairpersons at this year's Board of Governors meeting. The seats coming up for election are: Adult Amateur, Awards, Communications, Education, Junior/Young Riders, Marketing, RMDS Show Liaison & Scholarship.

While many of the incumbents in these positions are willing to continue their work on behalf of RMDS, several have indicated that they would like to move on, or are willing to cede their position to another interested member.

I know that finding people with the time and willingness to volunteer nowadays is difficult. It seems the same people are stepping up to the plate over and over again.

I'm hoping, however, that some of you may be ready for a new challenge. Each position does take some personal time but the amount varies and can be seasonal in nature.

Also, there is no reason why any committee chair cannot be assisted by a committee of like-minded individuals with the same goals. And many of these jobs do NOT require that the chair reside in the I-25 corridor and could certainly be performed remotely.

In addition, a little-known benefit of being a member of the RMDS Executive Committee (officers, chairs and chapter presidents) is that your cost * for RMDS-sponsored educational events is discounted by 50%! Perhaps you know someone who would love to take advantage of all the great seminars and clinics scheduled in the next year but who is strapped for cash? With the dedication of a little time to their chair duties they could also enjoy a wealth of education for half price!

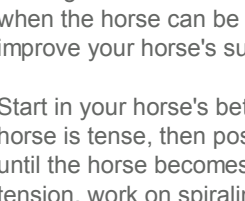
If you need further details about the specifics for any chair position, I believe the Central Office has job descriptions. Please relay the names of any interested parties to me so they may be placed on the ballot for the November meeting.

Thank you in advance for your help!

Michelle Anderson
Pikes Peak Chapter President
2014 Nominating Committee Chair

*Discount does not apply to required continuing education, i.e., 'L' graduates cannot attend 'L' Continuing Education for half price as this is required to maintain their certification.

Secrets From the Trainers' Vault You Ask the Question, Trainers Answer



Simone Windeler, RMDS Professionals & Trainers Liaison, is coordinating this new column in Centaur. Members can send questions to her (simonedressage@gmail.com) for her to request replies from area trainers to be published in printed and e-Centaur. Professionals who would like to participate can contact her with their area of expertise.

Q. How do I get good canter depart from the trot and from the walk? What if my horse picks up the incorrect lead?

Answer from Kathleen Donnelly. Contact her at kathleendonnely20@gmail.com.

This is a great question because transitions are the foundation of horse training. From jumping to trail riding to showing, transitions teach balance, strengthen and add to the horse's versatility by teaching the horse to be better on the aids.

To understand good canter departs, you must know the purpose of the transitions. One of the main reasons is to help strengthen the horse through better balance. The horse naturally carries more weight on the forehand, which is why a good transition can seem difficult.

In a written response, it's hard to know what level you and your horse are, so I am assuming a couple of items. One is that you have worked your horse on the lunge line and developed solid transitions. If the horse cannot do a clear transition without a rider, adding a rider will only make it that much more difficult. Make sure you've checked important items such as saddle fit, teeth and you know there are no soundness issues. Often these are overlooked physical causes of a training issue.

Before working on a canter-to-trot transition, make sure you have a solid four-beat walk, two-beat trot and three-beat canter with the correct tempo. If you have a lateral walk or tension at the trot, where the tempo varies, then before you go to the canter transition you must go back and work on rhythm and relaxation, the first step in the training scale. Make sure your horse understands the aids for other transitions such as walk-halt. Sometimes, the problem in the trot-canter transition comes out in the walk-halt, and addressing the issue there can help.

Once you are certain that you and your horse have an understanding of the basic aids, then you can work on the canter transitions. As an instructor, here is a short list of some of the common problems I run into: unclear aids, throwing the connection away, hanging on the reins, running the horse into the transition, going through with the transition when the horse can be a great introduction to leg-yielding, which will help improve your horse's suppleness leading to better transitions.

Start in your horse's better direction at the trot on a 20-meter circle. If the horse is tense, then post the trot and work first on spiraling in and out until the horse becomes comfortable with the aids. In the case of extreme tension, work on spiraling in and out at the walk first. I spiral into a smaller circle and determine the size based on the horse's training and balance. For example, a Training Level horse might only be capable of spiraling into a 15-meter circle, where a First Level horse could handle a 10-meter circle. This is something the rider has to feel and where a good instructor can help with feedback.

Once the horse is spiraling in and out in a relaxed rhythm, connecting better with my outside rein and moving smoothly off my inside leg, I ask for a canter transition as I spiral out to the bigger circle. If the horse is young or inexperienced, I even may use an additional voice aid. I time the spiral and transition so that I'm heading towards the arena wall which is a natural visual aid that may help the horse better balance.

Another exercise to try is trotting on a 20-meter circle at either A or C. Start by counter bending the horse and then softly going back to the correct bend on the circle. When the horse is smoothly changing bend and able to stay on the circle (some horses fall in or out on their shoulders when you change bend), then I will ask the horse to hold the counter bend. As I cross the open side of the circle (not along any part of the rail), I will ask for the canter lead and change direction to a middle circle. So, if I'm going to the left, I'll ask for a right bend; then on the open side, I ask for a right canter lead and take the horse to a right circle in the middle of the arena. Depending on the strength and level of the horse, I may only canter a half circle and then bring the horse back to the trot and repeat the exercise to pick up the right lead.

In any of these exercises, if your horse picks up the wrong lead, bring him back to the trot and start the exercise over. If there is a chronic problem with the wrong lead, then double-check the above list of physical issues and make sure your horse still picks up the correct lead on the lunge line. If all of those items check out, then most likely the causes are rider aids or a lack of strength on the horse's part. Never punish your horse for the wrong lead as this will lead to confusion and tension. Take your horse for some lessons to assess the problem and work towards finding a solution.

There are many exercises to improve the canter. If an exercise is not working, think about ways to break it down into smaller steps for the horse. For example, if you can't get a counter-bend at the trot, forget working on the trot-to-canter. Go back to attaining a counter-bend at the walk and then work on walk-to-trot transitions. Tension from the horse may tell us that the horse does not comprehend what we are asking. Take the time to help the horse understand and relax as this will pay off in the long run in your training and riding enjoyment.

If the transitions are not going well, it is important to find a good instructor to help you and your horse. Sometimes, having an instructor ride your horse, feel the problem and work to improve the horse's understanding will help you and your horse succeed.

Best of luck with your canter transitions!



Kathleen Donnelly is a USDF Bronze and Silver medalist, graduate of the USDF "L" program with distinction and trains in the Northern Colorado area. She enjoys working with students of all levels and all breeds of horses. Kathleen has published freelance articles in Dressage Today, USDF Connection and The Horse Connection.

Visit www.kathleendonnely.net for more information or contact Kathleen at kathleendonnely20@gmail.com.

Grass Troublesome for Easy-Keeper, Other Horses

Article courtesy of Kentucky Equine Research. Visit www.equinews.com/newsletters to subscribe to KER's award-winning weekly equine nutrition newsletter.

Nothing heralds the onset of spring for horse owners more than the retiring of winter blankets, the shedding of a woolly hair coat, and the greening of pastures. While some horses can graze springtime pastures with wild abandon, other horses cannot. Sugar-filled grasses cause problems for many horses, most notably easy keepers that have a predisposition for acute or chronic laminitis or metabolic diseases.

Different pasture strategies have been employed to restrict the intake of fresh pasture by these horses. One of the most widespread methods is the use of a grazing muzzle, an appliance that hooks to an ordinary halter, covers the entire muzzle of the horse, and allows only limited intake through one or more holes in the floor of the device.

[Read More](#)