



# CENTAUR

*educating horse and rider as partners*

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Information and articles in the Centaur Newsletter are the sole opinion and responsibility of their authors, and not that of RMDS or its Executives.

## RMDS Remembers Veronica Holt: Mentor, Friend, Angel, & One Heckuva Lady

MARCH 2015

Dressage Technical Delegate and FEI Steward Veronica Holt passed away on Dec. 23, 2014. The Scotland-born Holt was 71 years old.

Holt started riding at the local pony club, but a fall put her career in the saddle on the back burner. Holt worked as a reporter for several British newspapers and magazines and later on moved to Canada, where she worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Radio Canada.

After she moved to Colorado, Veronica picked up a life with horses again and quickly proved her outstanding management skills for show organization. She first became a technical delegate for the United States Equestrian Federation, and then was a Regional Director for USDF, as well as an FEI steward.

In addition to being the chairperson of the USDF Technical Delegate Council, Veronica initiated the review of the TD checklist, researched the issue of liability insurance to cover dressage show officials and served on the committee to evaluate the USDF Council/Committee structure.

*"She lived a life full of adventure, passion, dedication, determination and strength," said Veronica's daughter Sally Hayes.*



*Photo © Mary Phelps*

At the regional level, Veronica served as the chef d'équipe for the Region 5 teams at the North American Junior/Young Rider Championships. Locally, Veronica has served as president of the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society, assisted with the development of the RMDS TD program, managed Region 5's first CDI, and served as an advisor to other CDI managers and as a mentor to TDs.

Holt was named the USDF's Volunteer of the Year in 2006 and worked tirelessly for dressage in the United States.

*See Remembering Veronica  
Pgs.6-9*

## President's Message

RMDS is well on the way with Educational events.....

The "L" Program has been VERY successful and the Freestyle clinic was a joy to attend. In February the TD and Management clinic and the New Test Clinic **WILL OFFER MORE GREAT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** for members. March has one more "L" program and April begins the official show season.

As the weather warms up we are all finding more time to ride. As riders we are working on our own fitness and our horses need a steady work program to regain their fitness. We owe it to our horses to help them gain strength and endurance through good training. Make a plan and follow through with your training program and find the balance within your riding. Our horses provide us peace and strength through their kind and gentle souls.

I have spent time with a few members this year and hope to see many more of you as the show season gets



Safarie helped Gwen Ka'awaloa complete her USDF Gold Medal requirements. Photo by Kathleen Bryan.

**UNDERWAY.** I look forward to seeing more beautiful horses and enjoying the progress the riders are making in their partnership.

In April several of us our headed to Las Vegas to watch the World Cup. Some of the best riders and horses in the world will be there and excite-

ment is building. Every few years we get the opportunity to watch the top riders and enjoy the beauty of our sport. I hope to see SOME OF our members there taking in this wonderful chance to watch these horses and riders live.

As I progress with my horses training I am once again humbled by the challenges of my riding. Each ride and lesson is just one more chance to find the harmony in my riding and the effectiveness and timing of my aids. I love dressage because of the challenges and ultimate success found in the training. I hope that every dressage rider finds this joy.

*Aloha,*

*Gwen Ka'awaloa  
President, RMDS*

## Professional Trainers' Clinic with Christoph Hess

**Fri/Sat: May 15-16**  
**Iron Horse Farm in Elizabeth, CO,**  
**\$175 for both days**  
**Open ONLY to declared,**  
**practicing professionals of any**  
**sport discipline who are RMDS**  
**members. Contact Beth Geier at**  
**the Central Office to register and**  
**for more info.**

RMDS is pleased to present this first-of-a-kind RMDS Professional Trainers' Clinic with renowned FEI judge and former director of dressage training for the German National Federation, Christoph Hess.

This is an opportunity for our professionals to exchange ideas, learn new techniques, and make solid training decisions for the improvement of both horse and rider.

Just as school teachers need to meet offsite for Teacher Conferences, so do our professional trainers need to meet and have the freedom to discuss and critique different methods of training with their peers.

Following the European model, the clinic is closed to auditors. However, Mr. Hess has made room in his schedule to conduct a day of lessons which auditors may attend. (*see sidebar*)

Christoph Hess has led the USDF Trainers' Conference several times and is actively involved in the education of instructors and judges within Germany and around the world.

This is an incredible opportunity for our trainers to "move up the level" in their teaching skills, and all of us as members and students will reap the benefits.

### RMDS Clinic with Christoph Hess

**Sunday, May 17, 2015**  
Iron Horse Farm, Elizabeth, CO

#### **Auditors Welcome**

Open to all auditors. Rider applications may be found on the RMDS website, [www.rmds.org](http://www.rmds.org), or through the RMDS Central Office.

*For further information,  
Contact Beth Geier, Central Office,  
[rmds@indra.com](mailto:rmds@indra.com), for more info,  
or visit the website, [rmds.org](http://rmds.org).*

## Pikes Peak Chapter

On February 10th we held our annual awards dinner, recognizing the following Pikes Peak members for their rider achievements at schooling, RMDS or USDF/USEF shows.

### **Introductory Level:**

Bronze – Susan Borders

### **Training Level:**

Bronze – Elizabeth Petersen, Susan Borders

Silver – Elizabeth Petersen, Amy Michelsen

Gold – Elizabeth Petersen, Amy Michelsen, Kerry-Louise Boucher

### **First Level:**

Silver – Amy Michelsen

### **Western Dressage Basic:**

Gold – Susan Borders

### **Western Dressage Level One:**

Gold – Susan Borders

Congratulations also to Elizabeth Petersen and Amy Michelsen for their 2014 USDF awards.

Congratulations and many thanks to our 2014 Volunteer of the Year, Frances Carbonnel. We appreciate all our volunteers; without your help it would be impossible to hold so many shows and events.

A reminder of our second annual RMDS recognized dressage show on Saturday, April 11th, at Kaimana Farms, Elizabeth, CO. Judge – Gwen Ka'awaloa. Get a head start on your scores for RMDS awards and championships!

We have an exciting year planned, with educational events and activities including our ever popular 'Ready, Set, Show', Rider Health, Horse Health including Chiropractic, Equine Dental Presentation, Lungeing and Long-Lining and Driving Clinics.

Our next meeting, and Equine Dental Presentation, is scheduled for Tuesday March 3rd @ 6:30 p.m. in the private room at The Olive Garden, near the Citadel Mall.

Please visit our website, [www.pike-speakdressage.org](http://www.pike-speakdressage.org) for information on our meetings, shows and events. Or, 'like' our facebook page for regular updates on all our news and activities.

*Susan Borders,  
Pikes Peak Chapter President*

## NCDA Chapter

We have a very busy spring planned for NCDA starting with a long awaited Cross Training Clinic with Sarah Barnes on March 1st. at Paradise Found Farm in north Ft. Collins. We had to cancel twice due to the disease out breaks last year.

We're having a Ride-A-Test at Phantom Hill Farm on April 4th with Julie Haugen. More on this later. A schooling show is planned for May 3rd, Jessica Greer judging. To be held at Tomora Training Center. It will be the first schooling show in a series of three. NCDA members will accumulate points for 'Year End Awards'. We'll offer Western Dressage at the shows as well.

Hoping to fit in a big Tack Sale with Saddle fittings available sometime over the summer and a possible Western Dressage clinic. We have also talked about a Trail Obstacle Clinic. Hopefully we can fit everything into the busy show season.

Many of our members have taken advantage of the educational opportunities offered in our area by RMDS. The 'L' Judge clinics have been a great success!

That's all for now, more details to follow. Be sure and stay up-dated, 'Like' our Face Book Page.

*Renee Martig,  
NCDA President*

## Boulder Valley

Boulder Valley had a wonderful turn out for their 2014 awards banquet. I was so nice to see everyone enjoying getting together and cheering each other on for their year accomplishments! Thank you to all who worked so hard to put all the final details together from all the auction items (displayed so beautifully by Stephanie Boyles), to the slide show and our MC and award presenter Julie Barringer-Richers and all her stories.

We look forward to all the educational opportunities still to come this year, including the upcoming 'L' program March 14-15th, and in April we have our BVD Ride-A-Test, and Spring Fling at Singletree farm (remember volunteers are always appreciated). These are both great opportunities so come join in the fun and learning.

We are encouraging a buddy system to help new competitors learn about things such as show entries or braiding, we'd love to hear from you if you are interested in helping out. We also want to encourage everyone to come to meetings so we can get to know each other and make our club the best out there. I am also working with Connie at The Hitching Post to organize some videos that she keeps for rental to watch at meetings, just to stir up our brains on training ideas. Hope all of you are enjoying the wonderful weather but remember when our spring snows do come, they are needed for next winter's hay. Stay safe,

*Robin Gay, BVDS Chapter President*



# KL Realty

Boulder's  
Independent  
Real Estate Broker



6303 Ute Hwy

\$13,950,000

Equestrian Excellence at the Rockin R Ranch. 235 acres with 4 residences including 2 staff houses. A self-sufficient equestrian facility with copious water rights and abundant hay fields bordered by hundreds of acres of open space. The core parcel includes a state-of-the-art horse barn and a huge indoor arena. The 235 acres may be subdivided. A rare and exciting opportunity for horsemen or investors.



2349 Doyle Dr

\$825,000

Choice 3.44 acre lot with a custom-built home in. Spectacular views of the back range, a lake and open fields. The house boasts 5 beds and 5 baths with beautiful finishes. Horse facilities include a 4 stall barn, arena and paddocks. Miles of riding trails nearby.



*Karen and Laynes*



7171 Pike Rd

\$6,500,000

Rare 70-acre professional horse facility with a fabulous indoor arena and stable complex. Attributes include a large farmhouse, a charming second residence, twenty two stalls, eleven loafing sheds, automatic waterers, large turn-out paddocks, pastures, hay fields, outbuildings and water rights. Located only minutes from Boulder.



1565 County Rd 37E

\$1,780,000

Live off-grid in this fabulous retreat on forty-five acres with the Little Thompson River flowing past. Energy comes from both solar and wind, with a back-up generator. The home includes 5 beds and 4 baths in 5300 sq ft plus a 3-car detached garage. Perfect for the horse enthusiast with miles of riding terrain.

[www.klrealty.net](http://www.klrealty.net)

303.444.3177

[team@klrealty.net](mailto:team@klrealty.net)

## Use of Saddle Pad Logos in Competition

Beyond the permitted maximum size (200cm square), competitors need to be aware of limitations on the types of logos allowed in competition: "...Breed logos (for horses registered with that breed), national flags (for citizens of that country), riding club/business/farm names or logos (used with permission of USEF or USDF, respectively), are also permitted and must have the same specifications as sponsor logos. No other advertisement or publicity is permitted on saddle cloths or horses" (DR121.1). Competitors should also be aware of GR1307 Professional/Amateur Status rules that apply to the use of logos, as well as potential eliminations that may result from dress code violations per DR123.1.b.

## New Western Dressage Educational DVDs

Are you a judge or trainer wanting to know more about Western Dressage judging and conformation? Frances Carbonnel of Classical Legacy has created four new Western Dressage DVDs, including three of her rides at WDAA World Championships in November 2014 with the judges' comments and critiques are included. The fourth DVD explores conformation and suitability of different breeds for competing in Western Dressage. For more info, go to [classicallegacy.com](http://classicallegacy.com).

## RMDS Professional Trainers' Seminar Featuring Christoph Hess

May 15-16, 2015 (Friday/Saturday) at Iron Horse Farm, Elizabeth, Colorado.

Open **ONLY** to declared, practicing professionals of any sport discipline who are RMDS members. A closed working environment for trainers to work with other trainers, professional riders and their horses, collaborating and working with Christoph Hess to make solid training decisions for the improvement of both horse and rider.

Christoph Hess is an FEI judge and the former director of dressage training for the German National Federation. He has led the USDF Trainers' Conference several times and is actively involved in the education of instructors and judges both within Germany and around the world.

Contact Beth Geier, Central Office, [rmds@indra.com](mailto:rmds@indra.com), for more info, or visit the website, [rmds.org](http://rmds.org). Open session for auditors on Sunday, Mar. 17. (*see sidebar pg 2*)

## Trainers, Barns and Horse Businesses

The 2015 Horse reSource Book offers trainers and other equine-related businesses publish their contact information free. Go to [horseresourcebook.com](http://horseresourcebook.com) for more info.

## USDF Member Perk Program

Did you know that you are entitled to a discount on merchandise in the USDF store and discounts through USDF's Member Perk Program partners? The discount codes are listed below for your convenience.

- Dressage Extensions – NEW for 2015! (\$100 gift card with purchase of Petrie Dressage Boots) – USDFSO
- DressageClinic.com (15% discount on membership) – USDF20108070
- DressageMeetingOnline.com (15% discount on membership) – USDF4DMO
- DressageTrainingOnline.com (25% discount on membership) – 95122015
- MyDressageStats.com (One free month of membership) – 20159515
- Premier Equestrian (5% discount on all Premier Equestrian items) – myusdf15
- Ride Alert – NEW for 2015! (Complimentary annual family membership and discount on personal wristband) - URAS414USDF
- USDF Store (10% discount) – Member15
- USRider (\$29 reduction in the activation fee for new USRider members) – USDF15

## USDF Congratulates New 'L' Program Graduates

The United States Dressage Federation (USDF) is pleased to announce that 44 USDF members successfully completed the USDF L Education Program in 2014. This program is designed to prepare candidates to enter the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) "r" Judges Training Program, to qualify individuals to judge schooling shows, and to give competitors, trainers, and instructors greater insight into the evaluative process of judging dressage. The program also serves to provide continuing education for licensed judges. The L Program is an excellent opportunity for all USDF members to learn how to improve their scores and improve their ability to view other rides from a judge's perspective.

Region 5 Graduates are: Cynthia Begay, NM; \*Michell Combs, AZ; \*Daniela Leidy, CO; Sarah Lindsten, AZ; Laurel Peters, CO. (\*notes graduated with distinction)

# Remembrances of Veronica

## A mentor, a colleague, a friend, an angel

### Mentor

I met Veronica many, many years ago when she was managing Dressage in the Rockies for Michael Weiss. I knew just enough about dressage to tie myself in a knot. Veronica taught me a lot those days. I was the volunteer coordinator for the shows and they were big, so it was a lot of people to round up. It wasn't easy. She gave me ideas and sources to go to. She checked on me to make sure I was making progress. Not just because ultimately she needed those volunteers to show up at her show, but also because she wanted to help me. I had only shown in Alaska prior to those years; she taught me how to be polished, how to compete and how to love this sport.

### Colleague

A few more years went by. I received my USEF 'r' dressage judge license in 1999. My first judging job was at the great CARA dressage show that Uli and Dorie Schmidt hosted in Arizona. I was really nervous. Janet Foy and Jane Weatherwax were the other two judges and Veronica was the TD. The first morning I was finally starting to relax when Bev Rogers rode in on a stunning chestnut to ride Second Level Test 4. I was giving lots of 8's, several 9's and an occasional 7. It was a fun ride to judge, I was excited until the final salute. Then I panicked.

I was sure I had gotten carried away and I was going to hear about it from the "gang". As soon as the lunch break came, I practically ran to the scoreboard. Bev's score was a 78.8%. Oh boy, "I'm in trouble now," I thought. But then I looked over at another class that Janet Foy judged earlier in the morning. She gave Bev a 79%. Veronica walked up just then and said, "You nailed it girl," with her wonderful accent I can hear even now. So then I relaxed and went back to work.

At the afternoon break, Veronica was standing at the side of my ring waiting for the last horse to finish. She had a test in her hand. She sternly walked over to my judge's box and said "One of our competitors has a problem with her test. I'd like to review it with you." My stomach dropped out from under me. She placed the test in front of me and I started to review it. I'm sure my face was as white as a sheet. The entry mark was 10, with comment "tail to judge." The following scores and comments were as comical. As it started to dawn on me what was happening, Veronica burst out into that Scottish laugh of hers. I will never forget it. It was such a great first day judging, all these years later, a highlight for me. How lucky could I

be to have such a great friend get me started in my new career?

### Friend

Then a few more years down the road, I decided to go to California and compete in CDIs. Once I got there, again I panicked and thought, "What am I doing here?" I arrived at the first show; my husband Steve was there to "groom" for me, about eight days after getting to California. I was stabled next to Guenter Seidel, which at that time just made me more nervous. I really started to convince myself I didn't belong. Steve got food poisoning the first day and was out for the count. I was alone, I was scared and I really felt like I shouldn't be there. Could I possibly find a rug to crawl under or an airplane to take me home? Just at my darkest moment, around the corner walks Veronica. "Hi there," she said. As she so many times did in the years we knew each other. "I've come to help you." What? From Colorado? Are you kidding me? No, she wasn't kidding. She knew I was nervous before I left home and she got on a plane to come and cheer me on. When she found out Steve was sick, she took over and was the best groom one could ever ask for. I didn't place that well at that show, but I got the nerves under control and was even having fun by the end of the show. Three weeks later at Del Mar CDI, I beat Guenter Seidel in the Prix St. George class coming in 6th overall out of 28 horses. That was a highlight for me that never would have happened if Veronica hadn't come to help. I don't know if I would have even gone to Del Mar.

### Angel

Then, a few more years went by. My mother had pancreatic cancer. She and Veronica were friends, too. She trusted Veronica. The last few weeks that my mother was alive, she stayed at my home with Steve and me. Little did we know, the end was near. During the day, Veronica would come and sit with my mother, read, tell stories about Scotland, birding, or just hold my mother's hand so I could ride for a couple of hours. That was the best friend she could be to me. I will never forget the kindness given to my mother and me by this dear friend at the hardest time in our lives together.

She gave me birding, she gave me grooming tips, she gave me computer help, she gave me dressage rules, she gave me laughter, she gave me love.

I will so miss my friend, more than words can say.

- Kristi Wysocki

# Remembrances of Veronica

*Veronica, you are a very dear friend, and mean so much to me.*

*You were the one to teach me how to jog my horse in a CDI when I was pursuing Young Riders Championships. The next year, you were the FEI chief steward at Young Riders. When I qualified as an individual and didn't know what to do, you were there and took me under your wing. Region 7 and I had you as our driver in the golf cart race, and we won, thanks to your crazy driving.*

*The following year, when Region 5 had a team qualify for Young Riders, you were our chef d'équipe and we walked away with a Team Bronze. We laughed together as my horse, Verden, would ever so gently pluck one grape at a time off the stem and eat it. I also love the time I went to Washington for a NAYRC qualifying show and you smiled and wished me luck. Once I was there, I heard your laugh and knew you were the surprise inspector for USEF. That was such a fun show and you told me you would give me pearls to wear for showing.*

Veronica was one of the first people I met and looked up to when I came to dressage as an Adult Amateur. She was always helpful and friendly at the shows to me as a newbie on a horse who was known to catch the TDs attention every once in awhile for his antics at the shows. I always felt honored that she knew me by name and I was lucky enough to know her.

As a professional, Veronica carried on her pleasant and helpful ways with my Adult Amateur clients. Being helpful, but also just in general chatting them up and making them feel welcomed in the show environment. I loved hearing them say "I just talked to the most wonderful lady with a lovely accent!" I would reply, "That was Veronica. She is the TD." New to showing, they always had an expression of "Oh wow, I had no idea she was important!"

On a more personal note, we all know as professionals the shows can sometimes run us ragged. I had one such occasion when Veronica came to my rescue. I was riding a horse in the show ring when I heard my name called to the office over the loud speaker. I heard the page more than once but was busy riding. When finished, I handed the horse to the owner and dashed to the office. Once there, Heather Petersen said they needed a signature, but then looked at my face and asked if I felt okay. I said I was fine, just hot from getting off a horse. Veronica took one look and said, "I am calling the EMT." I tried to tell her I was fine, but she grabbed me by the arm like she was my mother, dragged me over to a chair and sat my butt down. "Your face is the color of your white shirt and your lips are turning blue. You are not going anywhere until the EMT sees you," she said. Needless to say, I did not move! Turns out I was just dehydrated and exhausted. I had to go for an EKG the next day just to be safe. I actually almost fell asleep during it so that tells you I was pretty rundown!

Thanks, Veronica, for sitting me down that day, getting me checked out, and some food and Gatorade in my body. I hope you continue to keep an eye on me and my clients in the future from above.

You were one heck of a lady! – From Katherine Simard

*Shortly after the Washington show, I had to give Verden time off and that included not taking him to NAYRC for my last year. Instead, I went as a groom and you were once again the best chef d'équipe. When I arrived in Virginia, you handed me a little red box. Inside were two beautiful pearl earrings, just as you had promised. I have worn them at every show since then.*

*Those times were wonderful, but our friendship continued to grow over the years. Every time I came to the Front Range, I would look forward to dinners with you at the Mexican restaurant or your home. I always enjoyed seeing your chickens and dogs, and my heart would break when I would find out they had passed away. When I moved across the country to Florida to work for an international rider, you were the FEI chief steward at the first show I groomed for her. You were the familiar face, beloved friend and shining star that put me at ease that weekend in unfamiliar territory.*

*Recently when I married, I wore your pearl earrings from the little red box. You weren't able to attend due to prior horse show engagements, but I had the pearl earrings, so a piece of you was with me on that special day.*

*I am so thankful I was able to have dinner with you and see Mississippi Rose and Daisy in September. We had my mom's homemade chile rellenos and I was in charge of the margaritas. (I went a little light on the tequila you informed me.) We had many laughs that evening. I will miss beautiful, vibrant you.*

*You are dearly loved and will be greatly missed. I love you, Veronica. – From Megan Bretey*

# Remembrances of Veronica

Veronica was a very dear friend to me. Our friendship began in 2004 when Veronica stepped up and helped my daughter Megan, and three other riders who were trying to qualify for North American Junior/Young Rider Championships.

None of us had any experience with Young Riders. Veronica was a TD at a show in Arizona that the girls were showing in to qualify for YRs. She taught them how to do the jog and talked to them about YRs and what to expect. Megan qualified, so we were off to Chicago, where Veronica was the chef steward. She again stepped up and helped us. We had a great time getting to know her during that week.

The next two years, Region 5 had a YR team that qualified for the championships. Veronica was our chef d'équipe. She was such an inspiration for our team. Again, her knowledge and expertise helped. She was always there to encourage the team. We even came home with a Team Bronze medal! After that, she kept in contact with Megan and me, keeping up with Megan and her horse adventures. She opened her home to me when I came over from Grand Junction to do the ribbons and awards at RMDS and Region 5 Championships. She was an exceptional friend and a great asset to USDF and USEF. I miss Veronica and her friendship. I was very blessed to have her as a friend! – Susan Gregg

I met Veronica early on in my days of first becoming a member of RMDS. I remember being in awe of how much knowledge she had about everything to do with dressage. She was always a help with publishing the Centaur, and as I heard from Gwen K., assembling it too, back in the day.

As a frequent volunteer, I ran into Veronica often on the show grounds. She always remembered me, which I found so classy, since I am certainly not a frequent competitor, nor am I any great shakes as a rider. She'd always share stories and news, and she absolutely made me a better volunteer, whether I was scribing, acting as ring steward or as a bit checker.

And, best of all, she wore the greatest hats! Our dressage community will miss her. But I know I will always see her at the Colorado Horse Park, sitting in her golf cart with authority tempered by a smile. – Beverly Swanson

## *To My Mentor and Friend,*

*Veronica Holt was a person of great character. She worked hard, and encouraged and supported others to strive for their goals. The more involved she was with her passions, the more she mentored others to follow theirs.*

*One of my fondest memories is collating the RMDS Centaur newsletter on a living room floor. Veronica enlisted my help and that was the beginning of my involvement with RMDS. Before RMDS had the resources and finances to outsource work, a few members were needed every month to get the news out. Veronica was instrumental in recruiting these members.*

*She was also working hard as a technical delegate and FEI steward. Through her travels, she touched many people, mentoring both TDs and judges. Show management felt comfortable when she attended shows because she always had their back. When Veronica was at a show, the competitors knew she would help them to make good decisions, often keeping someone from making a rookie mistake of breaking the rules.*

*Veronica worked with RMDS, USDF and USEF in the development of several programs. She would help others to grow programs and teach when needed. Her willingness to help others and her hard-working attitude were infectious. I along with many others were impacted by her; yes, I admit that I am a product of Veronica and her vision. I know that I would not have succeeded in my dressage goals as a judge and rider without her encouragement.*

*Veronica's legacy will live on as long as we remember her work ethic and her mentoring skills. She will be missed.*

*– Aloha my friend, Gwen Ka'awaloa*

# Remembrances of Veronica

I first met Veronica around 1984 when I started showing dressage. She always seemed to be the one organizing just about everything that had to do with a dressage show. Somehow she managed to have a big smile on her face for the entire day. Veronica knew every person and every horse in RMDS back then and she was there for us at the shows making sure we knew the new rules, trying to improve the footing, organizing the chaos after a wonderful Colorado summer hail storm and trying to keep the judges happy. When Veronica became a TD and saw us Colorado riders at a show in Arizona, California or Florida, she was still there encouraging us to ride to our fullest potential and she was so proud of us.

Veronica had a way of talking you into doing things that you really were not that excited about doing. I still remember her talking me into riding a FEI freestyle in the middle of a rodeo during the National Western Stock Show in Denver. This was many years before Dancing With Horses, and she wanted to show Colorado what dressage was all about. How did she ever talk me into that? For many years after that she would laugh about how a cowboy asked her how I got my horse to skip! (one tempis).

Veronica's children were about 10 years older than mine and I used to ask her for motherly advice. Most of her advice came in the form of tough love. When they were toddlers, she would tell me that it was OK to say no even if they would throw a tantrum in the middle of a store. When one of my boys wanted to dye his hair red, I called Veronica in a panic and she told me to go buy the dye that is not permanent and dye his hair red. After a day at school with red hair, he came home crying and thanks to Veronica it washed out! When my boys became teenagers one of her favorite things to tell me with a smile was, "Just remember, if they are creative enough to find their way into jail, then they should be creative enough to find their way out!"

I am going to miss all the fun we had at shows, all the laughs and encouragement, but I will never forget my good friend Veronica. – With love, Susan Traylor

*Veronica Holt was known to so many of us in the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society and U.S. Dressage Federation as a stern technical delegate, mentor and, to me, a great and dear friend and chum.*

*I had known Veronica in passing as a TD for some years, but really never spoke to her until the year I was showing my Appaloosa mare Snappy's Design and warming up outside for an indoor class with a fly mask on her. As that was not allowed equipment for the test itself it, wasn't allowed in warm-up either. But Veronica spoke to the judge and made the decision to allow me to continue to show. "Desi" had equine recurrent uveitis, a disease that eventually causes blindness and causes the horse's eyes to be extremely light sensitive. She lived in a fly mask 24/7/365 at that point.*

*Veronica spoke to me about the possibility of applying for a USEF Presidential Modification and encouraged me to pursue that if I wished to continue showing.*

*I researched the rules, wrote the application letter and obtained the required letters from veterinarians and did receive that modification. That allowed me to show Desi for one final year, her 21st, prior to retirement. That season meant the world to me and I was able to enjoy it, thanks to Veronica's help.*

*After that season, Veronica, as part of Two White Feet, approached me to become volunteer coordinator for the USDF Region 5 RMDS Championship show. It was a huge job, but somehow I survived it and she was very pleased with the results.*

*About that same time, I bought a house in Elizabeth and discovered that Veronica lived just down the road from me, actually between my house and the barn. For several years, we exchanged housesitting and dog care whenever one of us traveled out of town. She adored my Jack Russell Terrier "Capt. Jack Sparrow" in spite of his one-time attempt to kill her beloved chickens. She always said he was her reminder why she didn't own a JRT!*

*When I was at a loss in training my current mount, she was the friend who met my horse's half-brother, Junior, and commented on what a dear, sweet animal he was, encouraging me to find the way to forge a partnership with my current ride, Acer. She was the friend who met me at her gate with a measuring tape to ensure a bit was legal for competition. We developed a great friendship, all thanks to her kindness in helping a clueless competitor at a show!*

*I have fond memories of the two of us sitting outside her house as the sun set, chatting about horses, dogs, dressage, gardening, politics and the state of the world over a glass of Chardonnay, and I miss her terribly.*

*All of us who knew her through the sport of dressage were fortunate, indeed. To have counted her as a friend, as well – I feel truly blessed. – Michelle Anderson*

# Freestyles No Easy Ride for Judges and Competitors

## *Need Harmony, Partnership, Right Music*

By Linda Gaber

Linda Gaber is 2012-2014 Editor of *Centaur* and RMDS Communications Chair. Former Pikes Peak Chapter President Michelle Anderson contributed to this article.

RMDS Foothills Chapter member Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez offered the latest education program for judges in training, judge graduates as well as auditors in Loveland in January. It was a bonanza of learning, and a bargain (\$45 for members to audit). Riehl-Rodriguez, who is a 'S' dressage judge, Sport Horse Breeding judge and member of the USDF 'L' Faculty, gave the 30 participants a description of the artistic criteria with video examples in her presentation, Musical Freestyle Judging – Artistic Scoring.

"Humor is good in dressage," she said, and a thoughtful and creative Freestyle program is one way to add it. A challenge for Freestyle judges is "the order of elements and which elements are being ridden are never specified" by the rider.

Score sheets guide judges to evaluate a Freestyle for its harmony, choreography, difficulty, music and interpretation. "The goal is to promote clean freestyles, not push the horse to do movements beyond its ability," Riehl-Rodriguez said. "Harmony is essential in Freestyle. How comfortable is the horse with the extra difficulty of the Freestyle? Are the horse's movements fluid? Are there good adjustments of rider and horse to movements?"

To start, no rider can ride a Freestyle program unless he or she has scored a 60% or higher on Test 3 of the Freestyle level test to be ridden. No rider can include a test movement above the qualified level in the Freestyle. A copy of the qualifying Test 3 ride must be included with the Freestyle entry.

## Get the Music Right

For rider success at Freestyle, music is a key. "It should never interfere with the image you get of the horse's level or presence," she said. For example, a good music choice for a smaller horse and younger rider's Freestyle could be a Disney theme song. A poor music choice for a larger horse

and adult rider would be The Nutcracker's "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy."

Long before entering the ring, thoughts should focus on selecting and meshing music to movements for its suitability, cohesiveness and seamlessness. Does the music fit the character of the horse and his way of moving? Is it cohesive with a recognizable theme (repeating instrument, genre)? Does it flow seamlessly without long silent pauses or jarring changes?

At the upper levels, riders and designers usually do the choreography first and then set it to music. At the lower

levels, the music is usually selected first and then the ride is choreographed to it. "Background music" is more suitable for Training Level rides due to the lack of "things to do" as far as movements.

Phrasing is another requirement tied to scoring and related to music. Judges look for a minimum of six phrasing changes, or changes in the music corresponding to a change in horse movement. At Training

Level, there are only 4 phrasing changes required: Halt and salute, first movement change, gait changes and final halt in salute.

Click on equimusic.com for Freestyle music titles listed by beats per minute (bpm). This can be measured by counting your horse's footfalls at trot and canter for 10 seconds x 6 = 1 minute, or by counting footfalls for 60 seconds.

## Notes from Michelle

- Music choice and interpretation are separate scores for USDF.
- It is acceptable for the technical and artistic scores to vary (although not widely), unlike the movements and collectives in a regular dressage test.
- There is no minimum ride time, but the maximum is 5 minutes. Movements after 5 minutes are not judged

*cont. pg 11*

## **Freestyles** cont. from pg.10

and there should be a 1 point deduction off the artistic score.

- While technical execution is judged as Basics + Criteria +/- Modifiers = Score. Artistic is judged as Primary Criteria +/- Modifiers = Score. Scores may be in tenths, not just  $\frac{1}{2}$  points.
- If a movement is not shown, it is a zero preliminary score and averaged with the other side score, but the total should not exceed 5.
- A movement not shown also adds deductions on the artistic side under harmony, choreography and degree of difficulty.
- Music scoring is not based on personal likes and is independent of the technical execution score. This is the only score not greatly impacted by the technical merits of the ride.
- Music does not need to match the horse's footfalls, but this can be an upward modifier. There should be 1 beat per canter stride rather than 3, even though the canter is a 3-beat gait.
- If riders get ahead of or behind the music, they should make their transitions to the music, not to their choreography.
- Rhythm and tempo are judged by watching the front legs of the horse.
- Lyrics are permitted if not vulgar and they should not interfere with the concentration of the judge.
- Music must cease at the final salute.
- Degree of difficulty should be measured against the test standard for that level and directly linked to the execution of the movements.
- Movements allowed for the Freestyle level can be made more difficult if shown with a greater steepness of angle, more changes of hand or more changes within the gait, and even using just one hand on the reins. Elements shown at that level, but in a configuration called for in a higher-level test, are allowed.

- It is more important for the rider to have a good ride within their ability than to attempt a higher degree of difficulty and fail.
- The intentional performance of a forbidden movement is only deducted for as a single occurrence with 4 points off the total, similar to an error deduction.
- Cohesiveness is the primary design component. Modifiers include use of all parts of the arena with equal distribution of movements in all areas, balancing left and right sides of arena, and creativity in the trot and canter movements.

## **Skip the Score Killers**

- Reinback and turn on the haunches may be shown appropriate to the level, but are not required and interrupt the flow of the ride. They should only be shown if the horse performs them very well.
- “Test-like” comment from judge should only be used if movement is performed in the same place and sequence as in a test.

*cont. pg 12*



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- Creativity is when the elements are combined in imaginative ways, with uncommon lines and patterns. Judges can give plus marks for riders showing a greater number of changes/adjustments than standard to the level, music that enhances the footfalls of the horse, and the overall musical interpretation.
- Don't include long straight lines of canter or trot with no purpose.
- Elimination of a preparatory circle before lateral work creates a higher degree of difficulty.
- Circles should only be used in 4th Level or higher to express the music or to make changes. They are no longer required movements.
- Transitions do not need to be at a letter.
- Halt/Salute may be done anywhere on the centerline as long as it is facing the judge.
- Extensions must be on a straight line. It's not physically possible to perform a true extension on a circle, although a medium might be.
- The minimum distance any movement must be shown is 12m (18m at the lower levels).
- Disobedience that makes it difficult to follow the intent of the choreography can count against this score.
- Harmony is directly linked to the quality of execution (technical score) and involves the ease, fluidity, and trust between horse and rider.

Session C in the judges' 'L' training program March 14 - 15 completes the RMDS-sponsored education A – C series. Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez's topics are collective marks, equitation, rider biomechanics, basics and freestyle. Auditors and judge graduates also are welcome. It is at Iron Horse Farm, 33591 Pine Hills Place, Elizabeth. To attend, email [education@rmds.org](mailto:education@rmds.org) or contact Education Committee Chair Jon Haugen, 417 Promontory Dr., Loveland, CO 80537, 970-217-7820.

- The simple change of lead is 3 to 5 strides of walk.

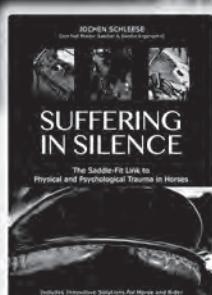
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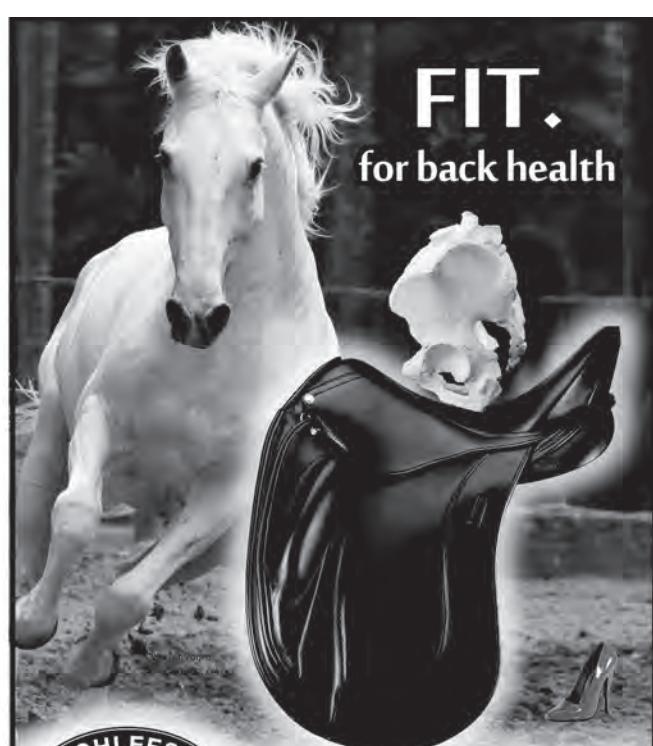
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## Shows and Events

All shows are RMDS recognized except schooling shows.

### RMDS CALENDAR

#### MARCH 2015

- 7** **Mariah Farm Schooling Show-Castle Rock, CO**  
Contact Lisa Lamke 303-660-2456 www.mariahfarms.net
- 7** **RMDS Junior Clinic Series-Vaulting-Stellar Stables-Parker, CO**  
Contact Julie Burt 720-347-8084 greeniemtn@msn.com
- 7** **Ride-A-Test-Paragon Equestrian-Longmont, CO**  
Contact Shirley 720-320-7788 fischrme@gmail.com
- 7** **Scribing/Scoring Clinic-8:00-12:00-Douglas County Fairgrounds-Castle Rock, CO**  
Contact Jon Haugen education@rmds.org
- 14-15** **USDF "L" Education Program Session C-Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez-Iron Horse Farm-33591 Pine Hills Place-Elizabeth, CO**  
Contact Jon Haugen 970-217-7820 defiancesport@q.com or RMDS Central Office-720-890-7825 rmds@indra.com
- 21** **Triple Creek Dressage Schooling Show Series-Longmont, CO**  
Contact Lynn McChesney 303-444-4291 lynntriplecreek@gmail.com
- 21-22** **James Shaw Clinic-Windy Creek Ranch-Longmont, CO**  
Contact Sarah Barnes 303-817-2783 sarahvbarnes@yahoo.com

#### APRIL 2015

- 4** **Mariah Farm Schooling Show-Castle Rock, CO**  
Contact Lisa Lamke 303-660-2456 www.mariahfarms.net
- 11** **Pikes Peak Dressage RMDS Show-Kaimana Farms-Elizabeth, CO**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 12** **Foothills Chapter Western Dressage Clinic-Anchorage Farm-Pine, CO**  
Contact Kris Cooper 303-847-9862 kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 15-19** **Reem Acra FEI World Cup-Las Vegas, NV**
- 24** **Dressage at the Peak Warm-up-Colorado Horse Park-Parker, CO**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 25-26** **Dressage for the Cure at the Peak-Colorado Horse Park-Parker, CO**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 25** **BVD Ride-A-Test-Singletree Farm-Boulder, CO**  
Contact Beth Geier 303-673-9840 bethgeier1@comcast.net
- 26** **BVD Spring Fling-Singletree Farm-Boulder, CO**  
Contact Beth Geier 303-673-9840 bethgeier1@comcast.net
- 28-30** **Alfredo Hernandez Clinic-Windswept Farms-Black Forest, CO**  
Contact Elaine Haberman 719-495-7004 www.windsweptfarms.net

#### MAY 2015

- 2** **Mariah Farm Schooling Show-Castle Rock, CO**  
Contact Lisa Lamke 303-660-2456 www.mariahfarms.net
- 2** **Triple Creek Dressage Schooling Show Series-Longmont, CO**  
Contact Lynn McChesney 303-444-4291 lynntriplecreek@gmail.com
- 2-3** **Grand Valley Schooling Show I-Grand Junction, CO**  
Contact Arlene Rhodes Arlene@skypony.org
- 9-10** **USDF JR/YR Clinic with George Williams-Stellar Farms-Parker, CO**  
Contact Katharine Robertson 859-271-7877 krobertson@usdf.org
- 15-16** **RMDS Trainers' Seminar-Christoph Hess-closed-open to professional riders only-Iron Horse Farm-Elizabeth, CO**  
Contact Beth Geier 720-890-7825 rmds@indra.com
- 17** **RMDS Seminar with Christoph Hess-open to audit-Iron Horse Farm-Elizabeth, CO**  
Contact Beth Geier 720-890-7825 rmds@indra.com

- 16-17** **Rocky Mountain Dressage I & II-Somerset Farm-Longmont, CO-USEF**  
Contact Dian Seabury 520-906-5545 dfseabury@gmail.com

- 22-24** **Paragon I, II, III & CDI-Young Riders/Young Horse/Sport Horse-Estes Park, CO USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 23-24** **Anne Howard Clinic-Windswept Farms-Black Forest, CO**  
Contact Elaine Haberman 719-495-7004 www.windsweptfarms.net
- 29-31** **High Prairie Dressage I, II, III-Colorado Horse Park-Parker, CO USEF**  
Contact Glenda McElroy 818-841-3554 glenda@glenroys.com
- 30-31** **USDF L Program D1 Session-Colorado Horse Park-Parker, CO-Closed**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net

#### JUNE 2015

- 6** **Mariah Farm Schooling Show-Castle Rock, CO**  
Contact Lisa Lamke 303-660-2456 www.mariahfarms.net
- 6-7** **Cheyenne Dressage & Eventing Open Show I & II**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 7** **Foothills Chapter Schooling Show-Anchorage Farm-Pine, CO**  
Contact Kris Cooper 303-847-9862 kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 12-13** **Sage Creek Dressage 1 & 2-Utah**  
Contact Sue Jero 801-330-5763 dressageshowsue@aol.com
- 13-14** **Rocky Mountain Summer Dressage I, II-Somerset Farm-Longmont, CO-USEF**  
Contact Dian Seabury 520-906-5545 dfseabury@gmail.com
- 13-14** **Fountain Valley Dressage-Young Horse/Young Rider Fountain, CO-USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 13-14** **Grand Valley Schooling Show II-Grand Junction, CO**  
Contact Arlene Rhodes Arlene@skypony.org
- 19-21** **Alfredo Hernandez Clinic-Windswept Farms-Black Forest, CO**  
Contact Elaine Haberman 719-495-7004 www.windsweptfarms.net
- 20-21** **Autumn Hill Dressage Festivals I & II-USEF CSU Events Center, Ft Collins, CO**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 26** **Showing On A Shoestring Show-Heber City, UT USEF**  
Contact Alison Child 435-640-3287 achild@kirwin.com
- 28** **USDF Youth & Adult Team Competition-Tomora Training Center-Greeley, CO**  
Contact Beth Geier 720-890-7825 rmds@indra.com

#### JULY 2015

- 10-11** **Dressage at the Peak Warm Up/Dressage at the Peak II-USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 11-12** **Rocky Mountain Dressage III, IV-Somerset Farm-Longmont, CO-USEF**  
Contact Dian Seabury 520-906-5545 dfseabury@gmail.com
- 14-19** **NAJYRC-Kentucky Horse Park-Lexington, KY**
- 18** **Dressage Schooling Show-Hidden Creek Equestrian Center**  
Contact Susan Borders susan.e.borders@gmail.com
- 19** **Centaur Rising Dressage Show-I-Pine, CO**  
Contact Kris Cooper 303-838-5086 kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 22** **Dressage Schooling Show-Hidden Creek Equestrian Center**  
Susan Borders susan.e.borders@gmail.com
- 24-25** **Sage Creek Dressage 3 & 4-Utah**  
Contact Sue Jero 801-330-5763 dressageshowsue@aol.com
- 25-26** **Autumn Hill Dressage Festivals III & IV-USEF CSU Events Center, Ft Collins, CO**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net

**31-Aug 2 Dressage in the Rockies I, II, III-COLORADO Horse Park**

**Parker, CO**  
Contact Glenda McElroy 818-841-3554 glenda@glenroys.com

**AUGUST 2015**

- 1-2 Dressage in Big Sky I & II– White Aspen Ranch-Billings, MT**  
Emily Luoma-Brester 406-698-9646 e\_luoma@hotmail.com
- 1-2 USDF L Program D2 Session-COLORADO Horse Park-**  
**Parker, CO - Closed**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 8-9 Millbrook Farms-Fairfield, UT USEF**  
Contact Jan Lawrence 801-885-3083 millbrk@xmision.com
- 9 Centaur Rising Dressage Show-I-Pine, CO**  
Contact Kris Cooper 303-838-5086 kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 14 Estes Park I-Sport Horse-Estes Park, CO USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 15-16 Estes Park II –Estes Park, CO USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 14-16 USEF r Judges Program - Estes Park –**  
Contact Heather Petersen 719-683-8435 slush@drgw.net
- 21-23 Alfredo Hernandez Clinic-Windswept Farms-Black Forest, CO**  
Contact Elaine Haberman 719-495-7004 www.windsweptfarms.net
- 22 Triple Creek Dressage Schooling Show Series-Longmont, CO**  
Contact Lynn McChesney 303-444-4291 lynntriplecreek@gmail.com
- 22-23 UDS Dressage Days I & II-Wasatch County Special Events Center Heber City, UT**  
Contact Nance Allen 801-274-1288 nance@xmision.com
- 22 Pendragon Stud Dressage Show-Larkspur, CO**  
Contact Leslie Terry
- 29-30 Anne Howard Clinic-Windswept Farms-Black Forest, CO**  
Contact Elaine Haberman 719-495-7004 www.windsweptfarms.net
- 30 BVD So Long to Summer-Singletree Farm-Boulder, CO**  
Contact Beth Geier 303-673-9840 bethgeier1@comcast.net

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

- 4 Western Dressage-Grand Valley Fall Show-Grand Junction, CO**  
Contact Arlene Rhodes 970-201-1779 skypony@aol.com
- 5-6 Grand Valley Fall Show-Grand Junction, CO**  
Contact Arlene Rhodes 970-201-1779 skypony@aol.com
- 6 Foothills Last Chance Show-A Rising Star-Arvada, CO**  
Contact Jan Danis 505-490-2805 jandalusian@gmail.com
- 12 Triple Creek Dressage Schooling Show Series-Longmont, CO**  
Contact Lynn McChesney 303-444-4291 lynntriplecreek@gmail.com
- 17 X Halt Salute RMDS Show -Estes Park, CO**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 17 RMDS Sport Horse Championships-Estes Park, CO USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net
- 18-20 RMDS Championships-Estes Park, CO USEF**  
Contact Heather Petersen 719-683-8435 slush@drgw.net
- 26-27 Anne Howard Clinic-Windswept Farms-Black Forest, CO**  
Contact Elaine Haberman 719-495-7004 www.windsweptfarms.net

**OCTOBER 2015**

- 9-11 USDF/Great American Region 5 Championships-Scottsdale, AZ**
- 10-11 Grand Valley Schooling Show III-Grand Junction, CO**  
Contact Arlene Rhodes Arlene@skypony.org
- 18 NCDA Fall Schooling Show-Tomora Training Center-Greeley, CO**  
Contact Didi DeKrey 970-222-3104 denisedekrey@gmail.com
- 31-Nov 1 USDF L Program Final-Westworld-Scottsdale, AZ-Closed**  
Contact Heather Petersen 303-648-3164 slush@drgw.net

**NOVEMBER 2015**

- 6-9 USDF National Championships-need to qualify through Regionals**
- EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS – open to all-2nd Thursday of the odd months-6:30 pm. Contact RMDS Central Office for location For updates to the calendar, check the website at [www.rmds.org](http://www.rmds.org)**

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**PERMANENT COMMITTEES**

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Omnibus Production .....	Nicole Bizzarro.....	303-939-0110 .....	nicbiz@indra.com
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Education.....	Jon Haugen .....	970-217-7820 .....	defiancesport@q.com
Junior/Young Riders.....	Julie Burt.....	720-347-8084 .....	greeniemtn@msn.com
Junior Clinics .....	Julie Haugen .....	970-290-8360 .....	defiancesport@q.com
Marketing .....	Aline Brandau .....	720-323-0578 .....	alinebrandau@gmail.com
Membership/Horse Registration .....	Central Office.....	720-890-7825 .....	rmds@indra.com
Nominating .....	Olga Hendrikson .....	720-556-4852 .....	olgahendrickson@gmail.com
Professional Trainers/Riders .....	Simone Windeler.....	719-287-2040 .....	simonedressage@gmail.com
RMDS Show Liaison .....	Beverly Swanson .....	720-401-0357 .....	ShowLiasionRMDS@gmail.com
Scholarship .....	MaryJo Hoepner .....	719-495-3648 .....	scholarship@rmds.org

**APPOINTED COMMITTEES**

Banquet .....	Laura Speer .....	970-330-7233 .....	Riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com
Nominating .....	TBA		
Western Dressage Liaison.....	Frances Carbonnel.....	720-979-3120 .....	classicallegacy@aol.com

**RMDS CENTRAL OFFICE**

Insurance, Show Standards .....	Central Office.....	720-890-7825 .....	rmds@indra.com
Registration Officials and Show Standards .....	Central Office.....	720-890-7825 .....	rmds@indra.com
Scheduling .....	Central Office .....	720-890-7825 .....	rmds@indra.com

**CHAPTER PRESIDENTS**

Arkansas Valley.....	Beth Hart .....	719-821-9354 .....	bethhart7@gmail.com
Boulder Valley .....	Robin Gay .....	303-516-1917 .....	blondie17536@yahoo.com
Colorado Springs .....	Pat Leech .....	719-749-2860 .....	pat.leech@skybeam.com
Foothills.....	Kris Cooper .....	303-838-5086 .....	kris@anchoragefarm.com
Grand Valley .....	Arlene Rhodes .....	970-201-1779 .....	arlene@skypony.org
High Plains.....	Olga Hendrickson .....	720-556-4852 .....	olgahendrickson@gmail.com
Northern Colorado .....	Renee Martig .....	970-278-0500 .....	silverpony@frii.com
On the Bit Dressage .....	Jessica Ford .....	307-797-2478 .....	aprilscomet97@yahoo.com
Pikes Peak.....	Susan Borders .....	719-740-1099 .....	Susan.e.borders@gmail.com
Platte River Dressage .....	Laura Speer .....	970-371-2934 .....	riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com
Wasatch Mountains.....	Sally Shaffer .....	435-655-3323 .....	sshaffer4@yahoo.com
Western Colorado.....	Barbara Graham Terry .....	970-963-4649 .....	bgterry1@comcast.net

**GOVERNING BODIES**

United States Dressage Federation (USDF) .....	859-971-227 .....	www.usdf.org
4051 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511		

**USDF REGION 5**

Director .....	Heather Petersen .....	303-648-3164 .....	slush@drgw.net
FEI JRYR Coordinator .....	Joan Clay .....	970-420-0887 .....	jnclay@comcast.net
Website .....			www.usdfregion5.org
US Equestrian Federation, Inc (USEF) .....			859-258-2472    www.usef.org

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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## **RMDS CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Arkansas Valley:** 2nd Thurs.-monthly, location TBD, Brenda Haley 719-369-2421 check [www.arkansasvalleydressage.org](http://www.arkansasvalleydressage.org) for times and locations

**Boulder Valley:** 2nd Mon., even months, location TBD, Sarah Barnes 303-817-2783 [sarahvbarnes@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahvbarnes@yahoo.com)

**Colorado Springs:** 3rd Tues.-even months, location TBD, Pat Leech 719-749-2860 [pat.leech@skybeam.com](mailto:pat.leech@skybeam.com)

**Foothills:** quarterly meetings, location TBD, Lori Mitchell 303-816-2375 [klassicalride@aol.com](mailto:klassicalride@aol.com)

**Grand Valley:** 3rd Tues. of the month, location: Mesa Mall Community Meeting Room 6:30pm Tammy Fagan 970-858-1604 [ttagandressage@wyoming.com](mailto:ttagandressage@wyoming.com)

**High Plains:** Bimonthly- location-TBD, Olga Hendrickson 720-556-4852 [olgahendrickson@gmail.com](mailto:olgahendrickson@gmail.com)

**Northern Colo.:** 2nd Tues., each month, location TBD Renee Martig 970-278-0500 [silverpony@frii.com](mailto:silverpony@frii.com)

**On the Bit:** location TBD, Jessica Ford 307-797-2478 [aprilscomet97@yahoo.com](mailto:aprilscomet97@yahoo.com)

**Pikes Peak:** 2nd Tuesdayof the month - check [www.pikespeakdressage.org](http://www.pikespeakdressage.org) for dates & location, Susan Borders [susan.e.borders@gmail.com](mailto:susan.e.borders@gmail.com) 719-740-1099

**Platte River:** location TBD, Laura Speer 970-371-2934 [riversidestables\\_evans@yahoo.com](mailto:riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com)

**Wasatch Mountain:** location TBD, Sally Shaffer 435-640-8797

**Western Colorado:** location TBD, Barbara Graham Terry 970-963-4649

## **RMDS EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

All RMDS Executive Board meetings are open to all and occur on the second Thursday of every odd-numbered month. Meeting time is 6:30 p.m. Meeting dates in 2015 may be variable, please check the calendar or the website. Contact the RMDS Central Office for location.

## **2015 RMDS-SPONSORED EDUCATIONAL EVENTS**

All events are open to **EVERYONE** to audit or participate unless otherwise stated. A great opportunity to continue your learning!

March 7	Scribing/Scoring Clinic-8:00-12:00-Douglas County Fairgrounds-Castle Rock, CO
March 14-15	USDF "L" Education Program Session C-Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez-Iron Horse Farm-Elizabeth, CO
May 15-16	RMDS Trainers' Seminar-Christoph Hess-closed-open to professional riders only-Iron Horse Farm-Elizabeth, CO
May 17	RMDS Seminar with Christoph Hess-open to everyone to audit-Iron Horse Farm-Elizabeth, CO
May 30, 31	USDF "L" D1 session (closed) - Colorado Horse Park-Castle Rock, CO
June 28	USDF Adult/Youth Team Competition-Tomora Training Center-Greeley, CO
August 1, 2	USDF "L" D2 session (closed) - Colorado Horse Park- Castle Rock, CO
Sept 17	X Halt Salute RMDS Show-Stanley Park Fairgrounds-Estes Park, CO
Sept 17	RMDS Sport Horse & USDF Breeders' Championships-Stanley Park Fairgrounds-Estes Park, CO
Sept 18-20	RMDS Championships-Stanley Park Fairgrounds-Estes Park, CO
Oct 31-Nov 1	USDF "L" Final (closed)-West World of Scottsdale-Scottsdale, AZ

**For details on these and other RMDS events:**

- Contact the Education Chairman: [education@rmds.org](mailto:education@rmds.org)
- Read the Centaur
- Go on the website - [www.rmds.org](http://www.rmds.org)
- Contact the RMDS Central Office 720-890-7825 [rmds@indra.com](mailto:rmds@indra.com)

## 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 7th of the month prior to the month of publication, i.e. January 7th 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: RMDS Office, Beth Geier, 2942 Park Lake Dr., Boulder, CO 80301, Phone: 720.890.7825, email: rmds@indra.com

### ADVERTISING

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

### 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 \$50, 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@indra.com, and cc the electronic copy to nicbiz@indra.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 .....	\$150 .....	7" x 9.5"
Half Page .....	\$90 .....	7" x 4.5"
Outside back half .....	\$105 .....	7" x 4.5"
1/4 Page (Vertical Only) .....	\$55 .....	3.25" x 4.5"
1/8 Page (Business Card) .....	\$30 .....	3.5" x 2"
(Horizontal only)		

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

Payment for ads is due on the 7th of the month. If not received by the following 7th 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 that of RMDS, its officers or employees.

## Utilize the RMDS Network

### Trainers and Instructors

#### Use the RMDS Website to 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@indra.com (note on subject line "Trainer Info".) Please include your name, phone, address, email, training locations and other pertinent info such as awards, certifications, lesson types, schooling horses, etc.

The website marketplace receives between 300-400 hits per month, and the trainer page averages about 80. RMDS receives emails 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@indra.com), 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@indra.com.

Proof of AA 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.

# Technical Delegates, Judges, and Certified Instructors

## Dressage Judge Ratings and Levels Qualified to Judge

### All Current RMDS Members

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
"r"	Recorded	Training - Second	3*	(FEI C)	All
"R"	Registered	Training - Fourth	4*	(FEI I) International	All
"S"	Senior	All	5*	(FEI O)	All

#### FEI 4\*

Janet Foy^ ..... 719-260-1566

#### FEI PARA Dressage 4\*

Kristi Wysocki ..... 303-648-9877

#### FEI 3\*

Sandra Hotz ^ ..... 303-817-2030

Anita Owen ..... 303-953-9904

Kristi Wysocki ..... 303-648-9877

#### USEF 'S'

Janet Foy ^ ..... 719-260-1566

Janet "Dolly" Hannon ^\* ..... 303-919-4112

Sandra Hotz ^ ..... 303-817-2030

Anita Owen ..... 303-953-9904

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez ^\* .. 303-263-0768

Sue Curry Shaffer ..... 707-483-0860

Kristi Wysocki ^\* ..... 303-648-9877

<sup>^</sup> = FEI Young Horse Certified

\* = Dressage Seat Equitation Certified

#### USEF 'r'

Amy Jablonovsky ..... 970-493-2833

Gwen Ka'awaloa ..... 303-917-3679

#### USDF 'L' Graduates (Schooling and RMDS Only recognized shows)

\*Denotes Graduation with Distinction

Simone Ahern \* ..... 719-749-9274

Julie Burt ..... 720-347-8084

Kathleen Donnelly\* ..... 970-310-8729

Beth Geier ..... 303-673-9840

Jessica Greer ..... 970-581-5613

Julie Haugen\* ..... 970-290-8360

Sarah Martin \* ..... 720-891-1369

Linda Ohlson-Gross \* ..... 303-840-9818

KC Parkins-Kyle ..... 303-841-9953

Kathy Simard\* ..... 720-981-4448

Stephanie Soule\* ..... 970-201-0747

Simone Windeler ..... 719-287-2040

#### L FACULTY

Janet Foy ..... 719-260-1566

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez .... 303-263-0768

#### Dressage Sport Horse Breeding Judge

Janet Foy 'R' ..... 719-260-1566

Gwen Ka'awaloa 'r' ..... 303-917-3679

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez 'R' 303-263-0768

Kristi Wysocki 'R' ..... 303-648-9877

#### USDF Sport Horse Seminar Faculty

Janet Foy ..... 719-260-1566

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez 'R'303-263-0768

Kristi Wysocki 'R' ..... 303-648-9877

#### FEI 4\* Para Dressage TD

Kristi Wysocki ..... 303-648-9877

#### FEI Level 1 Dressage Steward

Rusty Cook ..... 505-249-7586

Debbie Moloznik ..... 818-515-0377

Heather Petersen ..... 719-683-8435

Dianne Stanley ..... 406-690-9450

#### Technical Delegates USEF

Eva-Maria Adolphi (UT), r.. 801-913-6054

Rusty Cook (NM), r ..... 505-249-7586

Laurie Mactavish (CO), R ..... 970-390-5160

Debbie Moloznik (CO), r ... 818-515-0377

Heather Petersen (CO), r . 719-683-8435

Catherine Siemiet (CO), r . 719-942-5311

Dianne Stanley (MT), R .... 406-690-9450

#### Technical Delegates, RMDS recognized shows only

Joan Clay ..... 970-420-0887

Jeannette Hillery ..... 303-494-7718

Mary Jo Hoepner ..... 719-495-3648

Mindy Maguire ..... 720-301-0089

Didi DeKrey ..... 970-568-3916

Dee Stiers ..... 970-876-2987

#### USDF Certified Instructors

##### Training - First

Joan Clay ..... 970-420-0887

##### Training - Second

Julie Burt ..... 720-347-8084

RaeAnn Cook ..... 505-249-7586

Bridget Milnes ..... 303-660-4986

Kristi Wysocki ..... 303-648-9877

##### Training - Fourth

Simone Ahern ..... 719-749-9274

Loma Fowler ..... 303-229-5108

Janet "Dolly" Hannon ..... 303-919-4112

Gwen Ka'awaloa ..... 303-917-3679

Clayton Martin ..... 719-379-3716

Sarah Martin ..... 720-891-1369

Kathy Simard ..... 720-981-4448

#### USDF Instructor/Trainer Junior Faculty

##### Training –1st Level

Kathy Simard ..... 720-981-4448

#### USDF Instructor/Trainer Faculty

##### Training – 4th Level

Sarah Martin ..... 720-891-1369

Note: If you are a TD, Judge, or Certified Instructor and a current RMDS member and your name is not listed here, please contact the Central Office at 720-890-7825 or email: [rmds@indra.com](mailto:rmds@indra.com)

# Secrets from the Trainers' Vault

## Lets YOU Ask the Question



Simone Windeler, Professionals & Trainers Liaison for RMDS, edits this feature column, "Secrets from the Trainers' Vault." RMDS members are encouraged to send questions to Simone ([simonedressage@gmail.com](mailto:simonedressage@gmail.com)) and she will publish a select query with answers from member professionals. If you are a professional and would like to take part as a guest responder, contact Simone with your info and area of expertise.

This month's column is Simone's report of her clinic experience in Munich. Simone Windeler is a 'L' graduate, show manager and show secretary, as well as a RMS certified instructor for classical riding. Originally from Germany, she has lived in Colorado for 19 years. Learn more about her riding and training philosophy at [elegantrider.com](http://elegantrider.com).

What's  
Your  
Question?

### Classical Equitation Conference with Anja Beran in Munich, November 23, 2014 - Part 2

In January I shared with you how the horse is influenced by aids and how it learns to understand them. This month we look at the aids from the view of the rider.

The first question we ask is then - How does the rider learn?

- From the trained horse
- From the instructor
- After developing an independent seat
- One needs to practice daily and for several hours

Let's look at these for a moment:

Learning from a trained horse is absolutely incredible but they are hard to come by. I still remember the first passage I was allowed to feel on Frances Carbonnel's magnificent Fino. After having the privilege of feeling this I was able to translate it to other horses. It is much easier if you can feel and learn from a trained horse. Therefore the idea of learning together is not always the best one. If you are in the market for a dressage horse and you are serious about your own education - buy the most trained horse you can afford and learn, learn, learn.

Having a talented, compassionate and eloquent instructor is part two of the equation. Find a person you click with, someone you can understand and who will help you find better ways to figure out your own body. You normally get what you pay for. Good instruction means that your instructor has invested countless hours and dollars into their own education and therefore they have earned the right to charge what they do. Trust me - you will learn more from a qualified, dedicated instructor that understands the biomechanics of horse and rider, than someone that comes at a discount.

Now for that independent seat - that one goes hand in hand with daily practice and preferable more than one hour of riding. To develop that seat it is



nice to have access to more than one horse. Different horses will teach you a different feel. You don't necessarily have to own more than one (who can afford that). However you might find an instructor with school horses or maybe you can trade horses with a friend on occasion. Miles in the saddle certainly make sense, even more so if they are under the watchful eye of your instructor. Be aware of your body while riding. Can you tell which foot of your horse is leaving the ground, can you feel which side they are easy to bend and position to? Heightened awareness and the ability to observe yourself can really improve your riding. Set a goal of observing yourself and the reactions of your horse at least 50% of the time. Don't just focus on riding a movement, also watch

how well you rode it and how well the horse was able to execute it.

Often it is difficult for the horse to understand the body language of the rider. Here are some major factors that influence the aids:

- Weight and strength of the rider
- Feeling and sensibility
- How tall is the rider, especially how long are the legs
- Coordination of the seat
- How does the rider think
- Timing
- Body tension or tone

### **"Hand without leg, leg without hand"**

**Francois Baucher (1796–1873)**

There are numerous exercises that you can do without the horse that have an impact on your strength. Personally I have found strong abdominals to be a must and one of the favorite and easiest exercises amongst riders is the plank. Simple and something you can do first thing in the morning. You need no equipment besides a watch to measure your progress. You will be amazed if you keep this up daily for a few weeks how much your riding will improve.

To help with coordination and timing, Anja recommends to go dancing. Be it ballroom or Latin, or anything else you like. She told us that dancing has opened up a whole new area of feel and sensibility in her body.

While you can't do much about your height, you can choose a horse that is an appropriate size for you. Yes, horses that are 17.2 hands are impressive, they are also pretty hard to ride if you are 5'5".

When it comes to your seat only accompany the horse with it. If you push with your seat then you thrust the horse onto the forehand.

Once your aids get perfected, they become intuitive and like a reflex. You won't have to think about how you execute them - you just do.

### **What about miscommunication or contrary aids?**

Here is how most horses react if you are unclear or even conflicting with your aids:

- Your horse might get nervous
- Despair or get depressed
- Resist
- Get dull

François Baucher (1796–1873), a French dressage master was the first instructor that talked about:

### **"Hand without leg, leg without hand"**

Udo Buerger, longtime vet and rider agrees with Baucher and simply puts it this way: "Pushing the horse forward and not letting go in front makes no sense"

As a final thought: The true art of riding requires all of these

- physical ability
- mental preparedness
- character

You will need all of them to become the rider you truly want to be. Now go riding and enjoy your horse!

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a horse's head and neck in profile, facing right. The text is arranged as follows:

SERVING THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION      ELBERT, COLORADO  
40 minutes from Colorado Horse Park  
70 minutes from Littleton Equine Medical Clinic

**EAGLE'S WING**  
EQUINE THERAPY & REHAB CENTER

The Ultimate Therapy and Rehab for Your Equine Athlete

**EAGLE'S WING EQUINE THERAPY AND REHABILITATION CENTER** is the perfect place to bring your horse for surgical recovery, injury layup, therapy and rehabilitation or even just conditioning after a long lay off.

**EAGLE'S WING'S** facilities are state of the art design and provide safe, quality surroundings for your horse. Our staff includes two veterinarians, experienced trainer, and 24 hour caretakers with years of experience in caring for the equine athlete.

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Post Surgical/Injury Care • Orthopedic/Soft Tissue Rehab  
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X-ray, UT • Horsegym Treadmill • Shockwave Therapy  
Laser Therapy • Pulse Electromagnetic Therapy • Micro-current Therapy  
Chiro/Acu Therapy (DVM) • Customized Turnout/Stalls  
Personalized Feeding Program • Corrective Shoeing

[www.eagleswingequine.com](http://www.eagleswingequine.com)  
eagleswingequine@gmail.com • Elbert, CO  
303.648.9877



## **RMDS MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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

Individual Membership - \$60.00 (**\$65 after January 1-late fee**) Additional family members (same address) - \$45

Business Memberships - \$100.00 Education (non-competing) - \$45.00 Life Membership - \$750.00

Life Business Membership \$1,000.00 - Transfer Life Business to new owner \$100.00

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 AA card. All individual members will receive Centaur newsletter & the Omnibus.*

Membership & horse registration acknowledged via postcard or email. Mail completed form with check made payable to RMDS.

Indicate Local Chapter (only one):

Arkansas Valley

Grand Valley (Grand Junction)

Boulder Valley

High Plains (Parker, Littleton, Aurora)

Colorado Springs

N. Colorado (Ft. Collins, Loveland)

Foothills (Golden, Evergreen)

On the Bit (Wyoming)

Pikes Peak (Colo. Spgs. area)

Platte River (Greeley, E. Colorado)

Wasatch Mountains (Utah)

Western Colorado (Aspen, Vail etc.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (E-Mail) \_\_\_\_\_

USDF No. \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Names, DOBs, & USDF #'s of additional family members \_\_\_\_\_

I pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to go towards the RMDS Scholarship Fund. (Include amount with your membership check)

Please remove my name from lists sold by RMDS  Renewing member: Needs binder-**include additional \$8.00**

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Bridle Tag (a pair) add \$50

## **RMDS 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.

Both rider AND horse AND owner must be current before scores count toward year-end awards and qualifying for RMDS championships.

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

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

Horse Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Breed (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Registration # (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 (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (E-Mail) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Representative (If owner is a business) \_\_\_\_\_

# Helmet Controversies: A Division in Our Sport?

By Amber Clark

*Amber is a new member of RMDS and Pikes Peak Chapter, having recently relocated to Colorado from Georgia. She has earned her USDF Bronze, Silver and Gold medals.*



*Author Amber Clark riding in tails and helmet.*

The issue of helmets being required to compete at the FEI levels is a difficult issue to tackle. Of course, we all have a personal opinion and we have every right to that. That's what makes this country great! I will admit that I was motivated by Courtney King's accident to become an all the time helmet wearer. However, for many years I was not on the helmet wearing list. During those non-helmet wearing years, I rode young horses, trained horses, naughty horses in both the dressage arena and over jumps. I was lucky enough to escape those years unscathed. The question of whether my good judgment was firmly in place at some of these moments can be discussed at a later time! Today, it is a rare moment when I do not wear my helmet but there is, in fact, the occasion when I go without it. If I am injured in the moments when I choose to go without my helmet, I take full responsibility for having put myself at higher risk of injury based on riding without my trusty helmet. I say this so that anyone reading this will understand that I do think helmets provide a great deal of protection to the riding community.

That being said, there is a certain level of showing that gives riders the option of wearing the top hat for competition. I think in our community's effort to promote helmet wearing for the safety they can provide, we have, perhaps unknowingly, begun to villainize those competitors who choose to follow tradition. Up until very recently, dressage riders dreamed of the day they could don a top hat and tail coat. Now I am seeing articles written attacking those who choose top hat and tails over helmet and tails. As the rules currently stand, the FEI

Recently I wrote a response to a Facebook post on a subject that we are all familiar with: helmets. This particular article was speaking against the competitors at the AGD horse show who were competing in the FEI Arena in their top hats.

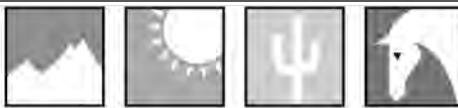
The issue of helmets being required to

competitors are given the opportunity to make a personal decision regarding their headwear. This can be argued but I firmly believe that as a dressage community our intentions for wanting everyone to wear a helmet comes from a good place but I fear that we are becoming overly judgmental towards those who choose to follow tradition and wear their top hat. I worry that our sport is flooded with criticism already and I hate for this issue to become something else we "form teams" over. Many of the comments and articles written against allowing riders the continued choice of the top hat route say things such as, riders who choose not to wear helmets think:

- they are too good to get hurt
- they think their horses are too trained to misstep or misbehave
- they think the pictures won't turn out as well
- or the riders don't understand they are a role models those desiring to train up the levels.

I don't believe any of these factors come into play when one chooses a top hat over a helmet for the show ring. In fact, I think the rider looks at their top hat there in its hat box shimmering in all of its glory and say to themselves, "Top hat, today I am taking you out for a spin." I don't believe that there is any level of premeditation against the helmet campaign that drives their decision what-so-ever. That day as they climb onto the horse they will ride into the show ring they have the right to make a decision: helmet or top hat. A horseman knows that accidents can and will happen, but has to make up his/her own mind about how to handle that knowledge. Next time you see someone, maybe one of your idols, competing in a top hat I challenge you not to think of them as less of a horseman but to think of them as a rider who wanted to carry on the tradition of top hat and tails while they are still afforded the right to do so.

As long as people have a right to choose what they wear on their heads to compete, I will support that it is their choice. I don't want to be misconstrued; I'm not taking a stance one way or another on the issue of whether helmets should be a requirement. I'm just coming from a place of hating to see our sport divided over yet another thing! Each one of us should have an opinion and stand by that opinion but there is a way to do it that allows us to disagree in our opinions yet still stand in support of one another. As dressage enthusiasts and horseman we have many more things that divide us than bring us together. For the sake of our beloved sport, I want us to find fewer things to divide us and more things to bring us toward support for one another. I greatly appreciate your time, dear reader. Happy and safe riding to all!



## USDF REGION FIVE

Arizona | Colorado | Eastern Montana | New Mexico | West Texas | Utah | Wyoming

Fundraising efforts are once under way for the USDF Region 5 Juniors and Young Riders as they try to qualify and travel to the 2015 FEI North American Junior and Young Rider Championships. The Championships will be held July 14-29, 2015 at the Kentucky Horse Park. It is a very large undertaking to take our group of 8 riders to Kentucky with their horses, grooms and Chef d'Equipes and they need all the support we can give them. If you would like to contribute or help with their fundraising efforts, please contact Joan Clay, our Region 5 Jr/YR FEI coordinator at [jnclay@comcast.net](mailto:jnclay@comcast.net) or 970-420-0877 or our Fundraising Chair, Julie Barringer-Richers at [jabr57@gmail.com](mailto:jabr57@gmail.com) or 720-341-5033. If you are still interested in participating in the FEI Junior and Young Rider program for 2014, the last intention deadline is April 30th but the less expensive deadline is April 1st, so be sure to get in your intentions soon.

Regional Championship bids for 2016 have been received and we should know soon where the competition will be held. Hope everyone is planning on attending the Regionals in 2015 in Scottsdale, Arizona at WestWorld. It should be a great show hosted by the Arizona Dressage Association! On a similar note, USDF is currently working through the bids received for the 2016-2018 USDF National Championships and we hope to know soon where that competition will be. It will be hopefully moving more west and

should offer our region a venue that's a bit closer than Kentucky.

If you are interested in being a delegate to the Board of Governors meeting, please contact our Nominating Council representative and have your name added to the ballot for Participating Delegate. Please contact Scarlett Fahrenson at [stgeorg@dakotacom.net](mailto:stgeorg@dakotacom.net) and let her know your interest and she can provide you with more details on the potential responsibilities. PM Delegate nominations are due in to the USDF office no later than April 15th.

The FEI World Cup comes back to the United States April 17-19, 2015 in Las Vegas, Nevada. I'm going and I hope to see many of you there! It will be a fantastic opportunity to see some of the best dressage and jumping horses in the world. The World Cup will also return in 2017 to Omaha, Nebraska. This will be a new venue and I'm excited to work there this coming April as an FEI steward when they do the first test event for dressage. It's great to see International dressage coming to the state where the United States Dressage Federation was founded. Till next month!

*Heather Petersen  
Region 5 Director*

RMDS Online - [www.rmds.org](http://www.rmds.org)

### Forms Online:

- USDF Instructor/Trainer Workshop Application
- RMDS 2015 Membership Forms
- 'L' Program - Judges Continuing Education
- RMDS Clinic with Christoph Hess

Find Complete Awards list from The Dressage Foundation: [www.dressagefoundation.org](http://www.dressagefoundation.org)

2014 USEF Dressage Developing Program:  
[www.usef.org/documents/highPerformance/dressage//2014/2014DevelopingDressageProgram.pdf](http://www.usef.org/documents/highPerformance/dressage//2014/2014DevelopingDressageProgram.pdf).



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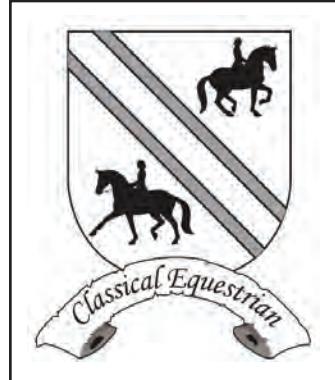
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