



The Centaur

Educating Horse and Rider as Partners.

An RMDS Publication

May 2012

“Teaching the Rider to Feel,” A Symposium with Sarah Martin

Two Views, One Great Learning Experience

What I Learned *By Judy Brown*



RMDS recently sponsored a one-day symposium with Sarah Martin entitled “Teaching the Rider to Feel” which was organized by Beth Geier, RMDS AA Chair, and hosted by *Stellar Stables* in Parker Colorado. It was a full day of learning for auditors and riders. This symposium included an initial lecture on “feel,” audience participation, videos, demonstration riders, and clinician riders. I participated as an afternoon rider with my horse, Audaz, as well as attended the rest of the symposium. I’d like to share what I learned from the lectures, demonstrations, and my own ride.

Sarah first introduced herself as a GP dressage rider and instructor for over 20 years who has achieved her USDF gold medal and is also a USDF certified instructor through 4th level. Sarah

Cont’d on pg 18

An Incredibly Worthwhile Experience

By Stephanie Boyles, VP Boulder Valley Dressage, and Founder & CEO of Unbridled Rider



So much information was brought to life; it was like drinking from a fire hose! This symposium was truly unique in the educational presentation as Sarah began by encouraging people to take notes, ask questions and remember that this was a discussion, not just a lecture. Sarah began with a clear outline to support the discussion of the day. Starting by passing out notebooks for auditors to keep notes with, Sarah let participants know that learning to “feel” IS something that can be both taught AND learned. She emphasized that riders with “good feel” are rarely just born, but are made through study and focus on particular aspects of understanding both the horse and rider’s balance.

Part of Sarah’s unique presentation illustrated which parts of the rider’s body influenced which parts of their horse’s body.

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Spring has come and summer is not far behind. New life is starting all over our area with new grass popping up, leaves budding on the trees and foals running in the paddocks behind their moms. A new competition season is also upon some of us and others are gearing down as the temperatures down south become a little too warm. As the show season starts for me each year, I think about what my goals are for the year for the competitions that I run and also in my riding. I'm bringing my wonderful paint horse back from over a year off due to an injury and it's caused a little bit different train of thought for me.

I'm drifting back to my old eventing patterns, thinking more in terms recently of endurance, strength and fitness. We've had fun with our timed trot and canter sessions and doing lots of road and tracks down our gravel roads. The neighbors have become

complacent (and I know they laugh behind their hands!) with the vision of Joe (my paint) and I trotting past them over and over with me singing at the tops of my lungs along with my Ipod. Joe is getting stronger and stronger and loves being back to work and this whole process has brought back to me once again how much I love riding and how much I hold dear the wonderful partnership a person can have with their horse. They save us so much money in therapy! I'm trying to follow the same strength and fitness patterns for my horse with myself, but that's a little harder sometimes... I'll ride in the wind, rain and snow, but it's not so much fun to go for a walk on your own two feet in that weather. Thank goodness for water aerobics!

We have finalized our potential candidates for the 2012 FEI North American Junior and Young Rider Champi-

onships. We have 21 folks who have declared, so hopefully Region 5 will field two full teams. 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 or 970-420-0877.

In a couple of weeks I head off to the USEF Spring Executive Board meeting. I look forward to sharing with you all the wonderful things going on in our organization in my next monthly update.

Please enjoy your time with your horses and the wonderful educational process that dressage is and can be.

Till next month!

Heather Petersen, Region 5 Director

ROSTER CORRECTIONS

Susan Reeve Cope

303-880-1562

Colorado Springs

CSDA is now in the process of confirming dates, venues, and officials for the competitions we will be hosting in 2012 and 2013. For 2012, we are hosting two schooling shows and one RMDS recognized competition, and in 2013, we are planning on one USEF show, a schooling show, and an RMDS recognized competition. Please check the CSDA www.csdressage.org and RMDS www.rmids.org online calendars for current competition information.

As part of the “Grow our Own” competition program, CSDA volunteers will be filling the show management and secretary positions for these competitions as we work to develop the skill and experience levels of our membership. Any RMDS member who wishes to become a show manager or secretary or to learn about the requirements of hosting a competition is welcome to participate in this CSDA program.

As part of the survey, CSDA members voiced concerns about the state of the CSDA financials. Any CSDA member is welcome to contact the CSDA treasurer, Rebecca Hutton, at 307.752.7330 or by email at rhtram-mell@yahoo.com and request financial information.

CSDA general membership meetings are held the third Tuesday of every

month and all CSDA members and their guests are welcome to attend. The agenda, meeting time, location, and directions are posted on the website at www.csdressage.org.

-*Patricia Leech*, CSDA President

Arkansas Valley Chapter

The Arkansas Valley Chapter had a successful meeting in March planning some upcoming events. The first will be a Ride-A-Test Show/clinic with Ellene Kloepfer in Canon City on May 12th. Please visit our chapter website, www.arkansasvalleydressage.org, for the prizelist and more information. We are offering western dressage, so please invite any friends or other interested parties.

The education committee is putting together a freestyle clinic June 2 and 3 with Simone Windeler. Information for this clinic is available on the website also. Jamee Amundson will be giving a dressage demonstration and representing the chapter at the Southern Colorado Horse Expo in Penrose on April 13-14. We are hopeful this will be a good opportunity to get the club some exposure.

The club has thoroughly enjoyed the unseasonably warm weather this spring and many members have been getting together for impromptu trail rides through our beautiful country. If you or your horse need a break, give

us a call! We love sharing this area with other horse people! Our next meeting will be April 24th and will be an educational meeting discussing the USEF Guidebook on Equipment and Attire for dressage.

-*Jamee Amundson*, President, Arkansas Valley

Northern Colorado

NCDA members and guests were treated to a phenomenal presentation by Jessica Greer and Joan Clay on the “Pyramid of Training” Sunday March 25th hosted by Mimi White at *Stone Gate Ranch* in Fort Collins. The seminar featured demonstration rides on four horses: Shadow, a coming 4 year old Friesian x Andalusian gelding; Josie, a 4 year old Georgian Grande (Saddlebred x Friesian) filly; Kermit, a 7 year old Arabian gelding; and Reign, a 7 year old Paint pony mare. The importance of rhythm and relaxation to the training of the horse regardless of the level of training, conformation and personality was emphasized. The audience could clearly see that all horses were treated with patience and kindness and that they responded with trust and confidence in their trainer/riders. NCDA wants to extend many thanks to Jessica and Joan for taking time from their busy schedules to make this presentation. We wish them the best on their “Dressage in Devon” adventure. We would also like to thank the owners,

Cont'd on pg 5

President's Message



Lori and Unico GPA

April has been a busy month. Show season officially in full swing, some great clinics and more coming up, schooling shows, and so many other activities to enjoy. The latest RMDS Board Meeting was productive with some exciting plans for 2013. One of those plans is to proceed investigating a symposium with clinicians like, Steffen Peters, Guenter Seidel, Debbie McDonald, Kyra Kirkland, Christoph Hess or another name

we have not thought of yet? Our Education Chair, Adult Amateur Chair, Jr/Yr Chair, Regional Director are all working together on this, so stay tuned for updates as plans are made.

This time of year also brings wildfires, especially this year with the dry and warm conditions. Some of our RMDS members were affected by the Lower North Fork Wildfire in the Conifer area. It serves as a reminder that we all need to take the time to review our evacuation plans, emergency contacts and first aid kits.

Last year I shared with you in a Centaur article my issues with fear and riding. I struggle with that daily and try to find additional ways to overcome and work with it. I joined "Flying Changes – The Ride of Your Life 2012 Tele-course" six weeks ago, offered by an equestrian professional

in New Mexico. The group has been meeting to set goals, review 2011 and envision 2012, identifying obstacles and opportunities, and then creating realistic action steps to reach our goals with the support, follow up, and gentle accountability from others in the group. One of the books that was recommended to me from another participant was, "Move Closer, Stay Longer" by Dr. Stephanie Burns. I would like to encourage any of you that have any type of fear issue, horse related or not to check out this book. The story of this woman's journey is so helpful and then continued with a real action plan. I got a great deal out of the 116 page book.

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do." *-Eleanor Roosevelt*

-Lori Mitchell, President, RMDS



Dressage Affaire 2012, Del Mar, CA - Steffen Peters and Legolas (left) Guenter Seidel and Fandango (right)

Cont'd from pg 3

Joan Roselle, Katie Grimland, and Mari Barrett for generously sharing their lovely horses, plus all the helpers who bathed and groomed them for the event. Our special thanks to Mimi White for opening her facility to the NCDA members.

NCDA will be offering a "Ride-A-Test" clinic with Kathleen Donnelly as judge and instructor on Saturday April 7th, at *Stone Gate Ranch*. Kathleen is a USDF bronze and silver medalist and a graduate of the USDF "L" judge program. Kathleen is known for her friendly and sympathetic approach to teaching as well as her sense of humor. The response from NCDA members has been enthusiastic and a full schedule of rides is expected. In the third week in April, members will be able to spend an evening with Alex Gerding, trainer, instructor, and "R" judge with over 30 years of international show experience in both stadium jumping and dressage. NCDA member who have taken lessons or visited with Alex enthusiastically recommend this chance to visit with him about his training philosophy. An announcement of the date, time and location will be emailed to members.

-Hana Van Campen, NCDA President

Boulder Valley

The show season is closing in quickly! It's April! Time to shine up your boots, get your jacket to the dry cleaners, get those white pants white again (is that really possible?) and try on all those new helmets! Boulder Valley's Spring Fling show at *Single*

Tree in Boulder is April 29th and the ride a test is April 28th.

Great news! We have launched an E-newsletter for our BVD members. To ensure that you receive yours, please add bvdrsvp@gmail.com to your address book. We look forward to bringing you news about our chapter members and events. If you have news or events to share with fellow BVD members, please direct your contributions to bvdrsvp@gmail.com.

-Kim Lampert, BVD President

Foothills Chapter

This month we are so pleased to have Heather Robertson join a great group of Colorado dressage riders at the Foothills clinic at *Capricorn Farm*, Golden, CO. The clinic is May 19th

and 20th. Plenty of room for auditors, so please join us. You can find more information on the Foothills website, www.foothillsdressage.org

We are pleased to announce that we will encourage trainers to join us at the "Ride A Test" with Dolly Hannon on June 16, at *Roberts Ranch* in Littleton, CO. A limited amount of trainers will be welcome to join judge, Dolly Hannon during the Ride A Tests. Hear what Dolly has to say about movement, rider position, horse, and suggestions on how to improve. Trainers will need to sign up early to get a spot and there is no charge for them. Please contact Lori Mitchell, bandwdressage@aol.com or call 303-816-2375 to make arrangements.

-Lori Mitchell, Foothills President

Important Things to Know This Month





Aim Higher and Achieve More with ANDRIA ALLEN

With record low inventory, buyer demands greater than existing inventory and historically low interest rates, NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO SELL YOUR HOME!

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NEW LISTING!

1767 COUNTY ROAD 20.5, LONGMONT

MLS# 677324 PRICE \$949,000. Walk out the back door to your own 4 acre stocked lake, or along your own stretch of Boulder Creek. Relax on the deck and watch the sun set over the Rockies. Enjoy 11.5 acres w/ easy access to Boulder & I-25.



NEW LISTING!

185 RATTLESNAKE, FORT COLLINS

PRICE \$458,000. 36 acres on top of the hill for incredible views. 4200 sq ft home, 3 beds/3 baths. 48x36 barn has 4 stalls, tack room, wash rack and storage. Lots of pasture with riding trails close by.



NEW LISTING!

14851 CREEKSIDE LANE, LONGMONT

MLS# 653269 PRICE \$674,900. Great views from this true country home on almost four acres. 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, stone fireplace in great room.

Nice 36' x 48' barn with large tack room. Location offers privacy yet only minutes from Longmont.



NEW LISTING!



5665 SAINT VRAIN ROAD, LONGMONT

MLS# 677621 PRICE \$595,000. Wonderful 5 acre horse property only 5 min west of Longmont. Meticulously maintained home has new windows, new baths, new stainless and granite kitchen, & a large 4 season bonus room. 160x140 outdoor sand arena, Gardner 3 stall barn w/tack room, hay storage and auto-waterers, large corrals. Good sub-irrigated pasture and views.



2075 DOYLE DRIVE, BERTHOUD

MLS# 667627. PRICE: \$1,375,000
2.89 acres. 5 beds, 8 baths. Fabulous country estate. Custom home w/fantastic finishes, 4 car garage, fabulous landscaping w/ outdoor & entertaining area that includes an outdoor kitchen & spa. Detached RV & two car garage/shop with storage loft. Check out the virtual tour at www.2075.wkre.com or www.andriallen.com

ANDRIA ALLEN
Aim Higher and Achieve More



UNDER CONTRACT!

2646 5TH STREET SW, LOVELAND

MLS #674504. PRICE: \$236,500
Immaculate 3 bed, 3 bath home, loads of upgrades, backs a walking trail and open space.



UNDER CONTRACT!

863 SUMNER STREET, LONGMONT

MLS #659613. NEW LOWER PRICE: \$186,000.
Darling 3 bed, 2 bath home w/huge backyard.

To see photos and more information about any of these properties, please visit my website at

www.AndriaAllen.com

303-810-8375



RMDS SPONSORED EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

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

2012

June 9-10	RMDS Winter Wake-Up (in the Summer), Tomora Training Center, Greeley
July 18-21	RMDS Junior Camp, Tomora Training Center, Greeley, CO
July 22	USDF Youth & Adult Team Competition, Tomora Training Center, Greeley, CO
Sept 20	RMDS Breed Show, Colorado Horse Park, Parker, CO
Sept 21-23	RMDS Championships, Colorado Horse Park, Parker, CO
Nov 10	RMDS Board of Governors' Meeting & Awards' Banquet

For details on these and other RMDS events:

Contact Michelle Anderson, the RMDS Education Chairman, at 303-646-1375, michand@hotmail.com. Also, read the Centaur, go to www.rmids.org, or contact the RMDS Central Office at 720-890-7825, rmids@rmids.org.

RMDS PAID POSITIONS

Every two years, RMDS goes through the open bid process for paid positions. Bids should be emailed to RMDS President Lori Mitchell at bandwdressage@aol.com. The following positions are up for bid and/or renewal:

- **Website Maintenance and hosting, effective August 1**
- **Central Office Manager, effective September 1. Will train.**

These are paid RMDS positions for qualified persons. Contracts will be awarded at the July Executive Board meeting.

Call the RMDS Central Office, email rmids@rmids.org, or go to the RMDS website for guidelines about each position.

Bids must be received by **June 15, 2012**. We hope you will plan to attend the July 10th Executive Board meeting as there may be questions asked of you.

to develop the engagement in each leg is to freely collect the gait, impulsion.

COND...
Arena: Standard
Average Time: 6:00
Maximum Possible Points: 430
Double Bridle Optional

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	7	7	Angle voices



LECTIVE MARKS:

S (freedom and regularity)	7
ELSION (desire to move forward, elasticity of the steps, suppleness of the back, placement of the hindquarters)	6
MISSION (attention and confidence, harmony, lightness and ease of movements, stance of the bridle, lightness of the forehead)	7-
ER (position and seat, correctness and effect of the aids)	7

OTHER REMARKS:

show much more in Ext walk

lovely horse rider needs to keep hdgt moving actively forward e + chin los

GET HIGHER SCORES!

Foothills Chapter presents
RIDE-A-TEST

With "S" Judge Dolly Hannon

JUNE 16 • ROBERTS RANCH

9609 N. Roxborough Park Road • Littleton, Colorado 80125

ALL levels are welcome, including Western Dressage • Auditing is free
\$40 per test of choice and feedback • \$65 for two tests of choice and feedback

ATTENTION TRAINERS! Sit with Dolly while she judges the tests and listen to her comments, score, suggestions. FREE (donation accepted)!

Limited availability! Contact Lori Mitchell at 303-816-2375 or bandwdressage@aol.com.

REGISTRATION FORM (Download this form at www.foothillsdressage.org)

NAME OF RIDER/NAME OF HORSE _____ NAME OF RMDS CHAPTER _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____ TELEPHONE/EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

CURRENT LEVEL RIDING OR SHOWING _____ LIST THE TEST(S) YOU PLAN TO RIDE: TEST ONE TEST TWO

TOTAL ENCLOSED (Please make your check payable to Foothills Chapter) \$ _____

Mail form and check to Lori Mitchell, 236 Spring Drive, Pine, CO 80470



www.foothillsdressage.org

To Our Colorado Dressage Trainers and Competitors:

I wanted to write and express my concern for a trend across the country of “blaming the judges” for low scores and not taking responsibility for the quality of the performances given. Anyone can have an off day but as I am now traveling most weekends to judge I am noticing that we, the judges, are usually the ones complained about at many horse shows when the rider receives a low score. The judges WANT to give high scores. It is not fun to give low scores but I see a trend of riders not developing their seats, and not being taught correct basics and aiding, and as a result they are disappointed in their scores. I often walk by the scoreboard and hear people complaining and I wish they would either attend the “L” program and/or scribe so they can see for themselves what goes into judging a dressage test and how hard we try to give them a fair evaluation of the test.

The “L” program is such an excellent way to improve a rider’s education and understanding, and the people who scribe know how hard the judges work to be fair. I was even told by a large facility owner that she was under a lot of pressure to hire “easier” judges, which was a shock to me. I told her that usually only the winners of a class are completely happy and that if the judges give over-inflated scores then what will happen when the competitor goes to the regional finals? The scores given at a regional where there is often panel judging are oftentimes lower and the competitor can end up disappointed and confused in their experience. I can remember and still feel that if my score improves or I learned something from the test that my goal of “riding better” has been met. All the judges want to see are happy horses ridden correctly on the aides with riders who have decent seats, correct aiding and are kind and fair.

We are so fortunate to be associated with such generous creatures who let us ride them and in general are quite tolerant of our losses of balance and sometimes confusing aides. There is no question that the quality of horses in this country has really improved and now we need to work together to make sure that the quality of riding improves at the same rate.

Thanks,

Dolly Hannon

Why did this animal that had prospered so in the Colorado desert leave his amiable homeland for Siberia? There is no answer. We know that when the horse negotiated the land bridge... he found on the other end an opportunity for varied development that is one of the bright aspects of animal history. He wandered into France and became the mighty Percheron, and into Arabia, where he developed into a lovely poem of a horse, and into Africa where he became the brilliant zebra, and into Scotland, where he bred selectively to form the massive Clydesdale. He would also journey into Spain, where his very name would become the designation for gentleman, a caballero, a man of the horse. There he would flourish mightily and serve the armies that would conquer much of the known world. ~James Michener

2012 RMDS Executive Board

President	Lori Mitchell	303-816-2375	bandwdressage@aol.com
Past President	Simone Windeler	719-287-2040	simonedressage@gmail.com
Vice President	Mary Jo Hoepner	719-495-3648	vicepresident@rmds.org
Secretary	Heather Petersen	719-683-8435	slush@drwgw.net
Treasurer	Sharon Soos	303-904-7534	sksoos@mesanetworks.net

Permanent Committees

Adult Amateur	Beth Geier	303-673-9840	Bethgeier1@comcast.net
Awards	Shannon Lemons	719-686-0064	lemons_shannon@yahoo.com
Results	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
Communications	Nicole Bizzarro	303-939-0110	nicbiz@indra.com
Centaur Production	Cathy Van Berg	303-916-6136	vanbergc@yahoo.com
Omnibus Advertising	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
Omnibus Production	Nicole Bizzarro	303-939-0110	nicbiz@indra.com
Webmaster	Michael Petersen	719-683-8435	webmaster@rmds.org
Constitution, By-laws	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
Education	Michelle Anderson	303-646-1375	michand@hotmail.com
Insurance, Show Standards	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
Junior/Young Riders	Julie Haugen	970-217-7820	youngriders@rmds.org
Junior Camp 2012	TBA		
Marketing	Sharon Soos	303-904-7534	sksoos@mesanetworks.net
Membership and Horse Registration	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
Registration Officials and Show Standards	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
RMDS Show Liaison	Susan Rudman	303-697-8528	sewrunred@msn.com
Scheduling	Central Office	720-890-7825	rmds@rmds.org
Scholarship	Mary Jo Hoepner	719-495-3648	scholarship@rmds.org

Chapter Presidents

Arkansas Valley	Jamee Amundson	308-672-1364	piaffenpassage@aol.com
Boulder Valley	Kim Lampert	303-638-3606	Dive4java@comcast.net
Colorado Springs	Pat Leech	719-749-2860	pat.leech@skybeam.com
Foothills	Lori Mitchell	303-816-2375	bandwdressage@aol.com
Grand Valley	Inka Spatafora	970-260-2660	classicaldressage@earthlink.net
High Plains	Wendy Cibis	720-570-6413	wcibis@comcast.net
Northern Colorado	Hana van Campen	303-918-3863	bigsprucefarms@bendelow.net
Pikes Peak	Simone Windeler	719-287-2040	simonedressage@gmail.com
Platte River Dressage	Laura Speer	970-371-2934	riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com
Wasatch Mountains	Linda Nickerson	801-647-3291	mail@snowypeaksranch.com
Western Colorado	Judith Family	970-923-8832	dns@rof.net

Governing Bodies

UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION

USDF

859-971-2277	www.usdf.org
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4051 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511

USDF Region 5

Director	Heather Petersen	719-683-8435	slush@drwgw.net
FEI JRYR Coordinator	Joan Clay	970-420-0887	jnclay@comcast.net
Website			www.usdfregion5.org

US EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, INC

859-258-2472	www.usef.org
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USEF
4047 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511

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

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RMDS CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE

Arkansas Valley: 4th Tuesday, 6 pm,
Sunflower Bank in Canon City. Jamee
Amundson, 308-672-1364,
piaffenpassage@aol.com

Boulder Valley: 2nd Mon., even months,
location TBD, Kim Lampert, 303-638-3606,
Dive4java@comcast.net

Colorado Springs: 3rd Tues., For location
information contact Pat Leech, 719-749-2860,
pat.leech@skybeam.com
www.CSDressage.org

Foothills: quarterly meetings, location TBD,
Lori Mitchell, 303-816-2375,
bandwdressage@aol.com

Grand Valley: 2nd Thurs. each month, location
TBD, Inka Spatafora,
970-260-2660,
classicaldressage@earthlink.net

High Plains: Bi-monthly mtg, location TBA.
Wendy Cibis, 720-570-6413, wcibis@comcast.
net, www.highplainsdressage.com

Northern Colo.: 3rd Tues., each month,
location TBD, Hana van Campen,
303-918-3863,
bigsprucefarms@bendelow.net

Pikes Peak: Mtg time and location TBD.
Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040,
simonedressage@gmail.com

Platte River Dressage: Mtg time and
location TBD, Laura Speer, 970-371-2934,
riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com

Wasatch Mountains
Linda Nickerson, 801-647-3291, mail@
snowypeaksranch.com, Location TBD

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

Meeting Schedule of the RMDS Executive Board

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 pm. Meeting dates in 2012 are January 12, March 15, May 10, July 10, September 13, and October 11. Contact the RMDS Central Office for location. Steering Committee meetings are held on the second Monday of every even-numbered month. Board of Governors' meeting is held the second Saturday of Nov (this year is Nov 10). Contact the Central Office for precise details.

"One reason why birds and horses are happy is because they are not trying to impress other birds and horses."



– Dale Carnegie

"How To Win Friends and
Influence People"

*"Sometimes love isn't fireworks. Sometimes love just comes softly."**

Renne was my forever horse. Big, beautiful blood bay with a commanding presence, a wild head of hair, and just enough white in her eyes to let me know what was on her mind. I called her my little sister, because that was our relationship – teasing, arguing, misunderstandings, challenges, but most of all, love. Our bond was a visceral connection, as if the blood coursing through our arteries came from one heart.

But it didn't last – she wasn't forever. She was only here long enough to take my heart, and then she was taken from me.

I couldn't bear living without her, but even worse, I couldn't go on without a horse in my life. I just needed another horse to care for, to ride, to keep some meaning in my life. A reason to watch the weather forecast, to justify all the horse paraphernalia, to use all that expensive tack. Not a horse to love, not again. And that's when Elysee stepped in.

Somehow, she knows this. She senses the dark hole that Renne left, and she just patiently loves me anyway. From the moment Elly came into my life, she has been there with a sweetness and caring and gentleness that asks nothing of me but my presence. She doesn't care that I slip and call her Renne, or that I don't think she's as pretty, or as talented.

She just keeps using the balm of her love to heal the wound, one delicate hoofprint at a time.

In her own quiet way, she allows me space to learn to love again. Small moments of trust and devotion that may somehow, someday add up to love. Elysee just comes softly.

**from the Michael Landon Jr. movie "Love Comes Softly"*

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: Centaur Editor, Cathy Van Berg, 1767 Rose Petal Lane, Castle Rock, CO 80109, Phone: 303.916.6136, email: vanbergc@yahoo.com

ADVERTISING

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

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

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

Artwork (ads) must be provided in electronic format. Acceptable forms include: jpeg, pdf, tiff, eps, and doc. IF UNSURE ABOUT AD FORMATTING, please contact the editor (contact info above) for consultation. No substitutions may be accepted. If your ad is submitted in a file format other than those listed above, you will be contacted regarding an additional charge for reformatting or redesign. Hourly charge for redesign/reformat is \$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@rmds.org, and cc the electronic copy to vanbergc@yahoo.com. Send payment and hard-copy to the RMDS office, Beth Geier, 2942 Park Lake Dr., Boulder, CO 80301.

AD RATES AND SIZE SPECIFICATIONS

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

Full Page \$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@rmds.org (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 averages 200 hits per month on the trainer page and RMDS receives 25-30 emails per month requesting names of trainers in the RMDS region. Don't miss the opportunity to expand your client base and gain recognition.

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

Advertise Events on the RMDS Website

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

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

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

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

Important Info on RMDS membership

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

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

Proof of 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

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

Status	Status	Levels	Status	Status	Levels
"L"	Learner*	Training - Second (RMDS only)	"S"	Senior	All
"r"	Recorded	Training - Second	3* (FEI C)		All
"R"	Registered	Training - Fourth	4* (FEI I) International		All
			5* (FEI O)		All

*may only judge at RMDS recognized shows.

FEI PARA Dressage 3*

Kristi Wysocki 303-648-9877

FEI 4*

Janet Foy^ 719-260-1566

USEF 'S'

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez^* 303-263-0768

Sandra Hotz^ 303-817-2030

Anita Owen 303-953-9904

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

Kristi Wysocki^* 303-648-9877

^ = FEI Young Horse Certified

* = Dressage Seat Equitation Certified

USEF 'r'

Loni Gaudet 985-966-3832

Amy Jablonovsky 970-493-2833

Gwen Ka'awaloa 303-917-3679

USDF 'L' Graduates (Schooling and RMDS

Only recognized shows)

Simone Ahern* 719-749-9274

Julie Burt 719-431-2342

Alison Child* (UT) 435-640-3287

Linda Coates-Markle 303-469-0279

Alex Curnutte 303-906-7083

Kathleen Donnelly* 970-310-8729

Amy Fulstone* 775-721-1123

Beth Geier 303-673-9840

Jessica Greer 970-581-5613

Julie Haugen 970-290-8360

Sarah Martin* 719-379-3716

Linda Ohlson-Gross* 303-840-9818

KC Parkins-Kyle 303-841-9953

Kathy Simard* 720-981-4448

Simone Windeler 719-287-2040

*Denotes Graduation with Distinction

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

FEI Level 1 Dressage Steward

Rusty Cook 505-877-1456

Heather Petersen 719-683-8435

Technical Delegates USEF

Eva-Maria Adolphi (UT), r. 801-254-3247

Rusty Cook (NM), r 505-877-1456

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 406-652-4061

Technical Delegates, RMDS sanctioned shows only

Joan Clay 970-420-0887

Jeannette Hillery 303-494-7718

Mary Jo Hoepner 719-495-3648

Mindy Maguire 720-301-0089

Dee Stiers 970-876-2987

USDF Certified Instructors

Training - Second

Julie Burt 719-431-2342

Jill Cantor Lee 970-209-8491

RaeAnn Cook 970-225-1408

Janet "Dolly" Hannon 303-279-4546

Ellene Kloepper 303-523-0191

Clayton Martin 719-379-3716

Bridget Milnes 303-660-4986

Kristi Wysocki 303-648-9877

Training - Fourth

Simone Ahern 719-749-9274

Nancy DeVaney 303-681-2516

Loma Fowler 303-841-0417

Sarah Martin 719-379-3716

Kathy Simard 720-981-4448

Melinda Weatherford 970-484-5218

Shows and Events

All shows are RMDS recognized except schooling shows.

MAY 2012

- 1-3 **Ralf Schmitzer Clinic, Tuscany Hill, Franktown, CO**
Contact Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040
simonedressage@gmail.com
- 5 **Flying Star Farm Schooling Show, Brighton, CO**
Contact Kim Benson 303-655-1815 info@flyingstarstables.com
- 5 **Schooling Show, Lazy J Bar S, Loveland, CO**
Contact Julie Haugen, 970-290-8360, defiancesport@q.com
- 5-6 **GVDS Spring Schooling Show I, Mesa County Fairgrounds, Grand Junction, CO**
Contact Inka Spatafora, 970-260-2660
classicaldressage@earthlink.net
- 5-6 **Gary Rockwell Clinic, Whispering Winds, Colorado Springs, CO**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 5-7 **Ralf Schmitzer Clinic, Tuscany Hill, Franktown, CO**
Contact Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040
simonedressage@gmail.com
- 7 **Sandy Hotz Clinic, Stone Gate Ranch, Ft Collins, CO**
Contact Mimi White, stonegateranch@gmail.com
- 10 **RMDS Executive Board Meeting, OPEN TO ALL, 6:30 PM**
Contact RMDS Central Office for more details, 720-890-7825,
rmds@rmds.org
- 11-13 **Patrice Edwards Clinic, Glory Falls Ranch, Black Forest, CO**
Contact Kim Martin, 719-440-8875, glory.falls@yahoo.com
- 12 **Mariah Farms Schooling Show, Mariah Farms, Castle Rock, CO.** Contact Lisa Lamke, 303-660-2456, llamke@msn.com
- 12 **Ride-A-Test Show/Clinic with Ellene Kloepfer, Palomino Gaits, Canon City, CO**
Contact Jamee Amundson, piaffenpassage@aol.com,
308-672-1364
- 12-13 **Rocky Mountain Dressage I & II, Somerset Farm, Longmont, CO-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 19 **CDEC Annual Spring Schooling Show, Cheyenne, WY**
Contact Jane Swanhorst Ringolsby, 307-634-2870
swanhorst@aol.com
- 19 **Tuscany Hill Farm Schooling Show, Franktown, CO**
Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040,
http://eleganttrider.com/schooling.html
- 19-20 **Heather Robertson Clinic, Capricorn Farm, Golden, CO**
Contact Lori Mitchell, 303-816-2375, bandwdressage@aol.com
- 20 **AHIEC Sunday Series #1, Autumn Hill Equestrian Center, Longmont, CO**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033,
jbarringerrichers@comcast.net
- 25-27 **Dressage in the Plains I & II, Sun Prairie Farms, Peyton, CO-USEF**
Contact Camille Griffin, camillegriffin@msn.com, 719-287-9197

JUNE 2012

- 1-3 **High Prairie Dressage I, II, III, Colorado Horse Park, Parker, CO-USEF**
Glenda McElroy, 818-841-3554, glenda@glenroys.com

- 2-3 **GVDS Ned Marshall Schooling Show II, Mesa County Fairgrounds, Grand Junction, CO**
Contact Inka Spatafora, 970-260-2660,
classicaldressage@earthlink.net
- 2-3 **Dance with Your Horse Musical Freestyle Clinic, Palomino Gaits, Canon City, CO**
Contact Brenda Haley, brenadahaley@q.com, 719-369-2421
- 9-10 **RMDS Winter Wake-Up In Summer, Tomora Farm, Greeley, CO-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 15-16 **Sage Creek I & II, Sage Creek Equestrian, Heber, UT-USEF**
Contact Bobbie Jo Derksen, 801-376-9062,
bbjsagecreek@hotmail.com
- 16 **Foothills Chapter Ride-A-Test with Janet Hannon, Roberts Ranch, Littleton, CO**
Contact Lori Mitchell, 303-816-2375, bandwdressage@aol.com
- 17 **Centaur Rising Dressage Show I, Pine, CO, RMDS**
Contact Kristann Cooper, 303-838-5086,
kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 23-24 **Autumn Hill Dressage Festival I & II, Autumn Hill Equestrian Center, Longmont, CO-USEF**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033,
jbarringerrichers@comcast.net
- 30 **Sun Prairie RMDS Show II, Sun Prairie Farms, Peyton, CO**
Contact Camille Griffin, camillegriffin@msn.com, 719-287-9197
- 30 **Tuscany Hill Farm Schooling Show, Franktown, CO**
Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040,
http://eleganttrider.com/schooling.html

JULY 2012

- 1 **Sun Prairie RMDS Show III, Sun Prairie Farms, Peyton, CO**
Contact Camille Griffin, camillegriffin@msn.com, 719-287-9197
- 7-8 **Rocky Mountain Dressage III & IV, Somerset Farm, Longmont, CO-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 10 **RMDS Executive Board Meeting, OPEN TO ALL, 6:30 PM**
Contact RMDS Central Office for more details, 720-890-7825,
rmds@rmds.org
- 13 **Dressage at the Peak Summer Warm-Up, Fountain Valley School, Colorado Spgs, CO-USEF**
Contact Heater Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 13 **Wasatch Back I, Heber City, UT-USEF**
Contact Alison Child, 435-640-3287, achild@kirwin.com
- 14 **Wasatch Mountain Dressage Show, Heber City, UT-USEF**
Contact Heater Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 14 **Dressage at the Peak Summer II, Fountain Valley School, Colorado Spgs, CO-USEF**
Contact Heater Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net
- 15 **Centaur Rising Dressage Show II, Pine, CO, RMDS**
Contact Kristann Cooper, 303-838-5086,
kris@anchoragefarm.com
- 15 **AHIEC Sunday Series #2, Autumn Hill Equestrian Center, Longmont, CO**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers 720-341-5033,
jbarringerrichers@comcast.net
- 18-21 **RMDS Junior Camp, Tomora Training Center, Greeley, CO**
Contact Julie Haugen, defiancesport@q.com

21 **MM Ranch Schooling Show, Fountain, CO**
Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040
<http://eleganttrider.com/schooling.html>

22 **USDF Youth & Adult Team Competition, Tomora Training Center, Greeley, CO**
Contact Julie Haugen, defiancesport@q.com

27-28 **Sage Creek III & IV, Sage Creek Equestrian, Heber, UT-USEF**
Contact Bobbie Jo Derksen, 801-376-9062,
bbjsagecreek@hotmail.com

28-29 **Autumn Hill Dressage Festival III & IV, Autumn Hill Equestrian Center, Longmont, CO-USEF**
Contact Julie Barringer-Richers, 720-341-5033,
jbarringerrichers@comcast.net

AUGUST 2012

1 **Ballet on Horseback, Boulder County Fairgrounds, Boulder, CO**
Two performances

3-5 **Dressage in the Rockies I, II, III, Colorado Horse Park, Parker, CO-USEF**
Glenda McElroy, 818-841-3554, glenda@glenroys.com

4-5 **Cheyenne Dressage & Eventing Dressage Show, Cheyenne, WY-USEF**
Contact Steve Siegel, 307-632-7587,
steve@wyomingcarriages.com

4-5 **Heather Robertson Clinic, Capricorn Farm, Golden, CO**
Contact Lori Mitchell, 303-816-2375, bandwdressage@aol.com

10-12 **Dressage at Sun Prairie I & II, Sun Prairie Farms, Peyton, CO-USEF**
Contact Camille Griffin, camillegriffin@msn.com, 719-287-9197

11 **Tuscany Hill Farm Schooling Show, Franktown, CO**
Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040,
<http://eleganttrider.com/schooling.html>

11-12 **Millbrook Farms Dressage Show, Fairfield, UT-USEF**
Contact Jan Lawrence, 801-631-2516, millbrk@xmission.com

12 **Centaur Rising Dressage Show III, Pine, CO-RMDS**
Contact Kristann Cooper, 303-838-5086,
kris@anchoragefarm.com

17-19 **Paragon I, II, III CDI***, Estes Park, CO-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net

26 **Boulder Valley So Long to Summer, Sextant Farm, Longmont, CO-RMDS**
Contact Beth Geier, 303-673-9840, bethgeier1@comcast.net

25-26 **Utah Dressage Society Annual Show I & II, Heber, UT-USEF**
Contact Susan Jero, 801-330-5763, sjero@aol.com

SEPTEMBER 2012

1 **Foothills Chapter Ride-A-Test-with Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez, A Rising Star, Arvada, CO**
Contact Lori Mitchell, 303-816-2375, bandwdressage@aol.com

1-2 **GVDS Fall Show, Mesa County Fairgrounds, Grand Junction, CO-USEF**
Contact Inka Spatafora, 970-260-2660,
classicaldressage@earthlink.net

2 **Foothills Last Chance Dressage Show, A Rising Star, Arvada, CO**
Contact Lori Mitchell, 303-816-2375, bandwdressage@aol.com

8 **Pendragon Stud Dressage Show II, Larkspur, CO-RMDS**
Contact Leslie Terry, 303-688-4147, Lt2@kellin.net

8-9 **USDF JR/YR Clinic with George Williams, Stellar Stables, Franktown, CO**
Contact Susan Rudman, 303-697-8528

13 **RMDS Executive Board Meeting, OPEN TO ALL, 6:30 PM**
Contact RMDS Central Office for more details, 720-890-7825,
rmds@rmds.org

15 **Tuscany Hill Farm Schooling Show, Franktown, CO**
Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040,
<http://eleganttrider.com/schooling.html>

20 **RMDS Breed Show, Championships & Open Show, Parker, CO-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net

21-23 **RMDS Championship & Open Show, Parker, CO-USEF**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net

OCTOBER 2012

5-7 **USDF/Great American Region 5 Championships, Wasatch Event Center, Heber City, UT**
Contact Heather Petersen, 719-683-8435, slush@drwg.net

6 **Ride-A-Test Show/Clinic with Jenny Baldwin, Palomino Gaits, Canon City, CO**
Contact Jamee Amundson, piaffenpassage@aol.com,
308-672-1364

11 **RMDS Executive Board Meeting, OPEN TO ALL, 6:30 PM**
Contact RMDS Central Office for more details, 720-890-7825,
rmds@rmds.org

13-14 **GVDS Fall Harvest Schooling Show III Mesa County Fairgrounds, Grand Junction, CO**
Contact Inka Spatafora, 970-260-2660,
classicaldressage@earthlink.net

20 **Dressage in Pink, Sextant Farms, Longmont, CO**
Contact Donna Baxter, 303-857-3879,
highbrowbling@mesanetworks.net

NOVEMBER 2012

3-4 **USDF L Program, Final Exam, ADA Fall Fiesta, Scottsdale, Arizona.**
Contact Dorie Vlatten Schmitz, 480-580-0634,
dvschmitz@msn.com

10 **RMDS Board of Governors'**

10 **RMDS Awards' Banquet**

DECEMBER 2012

5-8 **2012 Adequan/USDF Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA**
Contact USDF.org/convention

For updates to the calendar, go to www.rmds.org

THESE EVENTS ARE DEPENDENT UPON VOLUNTEERS. IF YOU CAN HELP, PLEASE CONTACT THE EVENT ORGANIZER!



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Getting The Best From Your Farrier

By Jeff Rodriguez, CJF

Over dinner one evening my wife Debbie asked, "How can the average competitor increase their chances of their farrier becoming a more productive member of their, the rider/trainer's, competitive team?"

Finding that a very interesting question I spoke to a couple of my peers and gained some very useful information. I'm going to share this with you, because if there is one thing I'm sure of it's that competitive riders want every edge they can get, and these are extremely valuable tips. Remember these came from farriers who are shoeing top-of-the-line horses, and they know what gives them the opportunity to keep their charges sound and able to perform to their potential.

It's extremely useful for a farrier to have your show schedule well in advance. The more the farrier is aware of which competitions you have scheduled, the better job they can do ensuring your horses are shod a week to ten days prior to competing. Think about that for a moment. Our horses are being asked to be correct, relaxed, and athletic. It's unreasonable to ask them to do this unless their feet are in optimal condition. Shoeing them just before putting them on the van is an unsound practice, as is asking them to perform with feet that are too long. We don't expect ballerinas to dance in dairy boots, nor do we strip long

distance runners of their foot calluses just before a marathon. We want our horses to perform at their best, and to do that they have to be dialed in, not shod either ten days too soon or too late.

It's extremely useful for a farrier to have your show schedule well in advance. The more the farrier is aware of which competitions you have scheduled, the better job they can do ensuring your horses are shod a week to ten days prior to competing.

Your farrier knows the correct intervals for each individual's needs. With a plan in place the farrier can do his best to give the horse the maximum opportunity to be competitive. There is a reasonable chance that your farrier will be trying to meet the needs of many riders and trainers, so scheduling information can save the day. Quite like you, your farrier really likes it when your horse does well, and they appreciate the chance to be part of a successful team. They love to see their charges win.

Another great piece of information for your farrier to have is a general description of the surfaces you and your horse will encounter on the show grounds. What is the footing composed of? How deep can it get in each arena's corners? To your knowledge is the arena consistent in

its composition? Equally important is the same information, but pertaining to the warm-up arenas. You're going to spend lots of time warming up and working...that surface is as critical as the show ring. Having yourself and

your horse prepared to do your best in your tests won't count for much if your horse has become sore footed in the warm-ups. Knowing all this will provide a fountainhead of information to your shoer, and they will be glad to have it.

I've had the good fortune of shoeing for some of the most accomplished horsemen in Colorado. The top competitive riders and trainers get 100% support from their vets, farriers, and employees. They leave very little to chance. They know getting the most from all their team members is what produces progress and success. Engaging your farrier in this manner will gain you terrific results.

Good luck in the show ring!



proceeded to define aspects of "Rider Feel" as follows:

Understanding the Ingredients of "Rider Feel"

- **Awareness** – the rider must be aware of their body position and the horse's responses.
- **Alignment** – the rider must understand the proper alignment of their body on the horse and work to improve their position (in all 3 dimensions—side-to-side, front-to-back, and vertical top to bottom). Riders must learn to "feel" their own alignment.
- **Influence** – the rider must learn how to align their body and to apply aids as needed to properly influence the horse.
- **Order** – the rider must learn to "feel" the order of the horse's footfalls in all three gaits. The walk is a 4 beat gait in the order of (1)left hind, (2)left fore, (3)right hind, and (4)right fore. The trot is a 2-beat gait with the legs moving diagonally in the order of (1)left hind and right fore together, then (2)right hind and left fore together. The canter is a three beat gait. In the right lead canter, the footfall order is (1) left hind, (2)right hind and left fore together, (3)right fore (leading leg) followed by a moment of suspension. The rider needs to be familiar with these footfalls and to be able to name them as they occur when riding.
- **Timing** – the rider must learn when to best apply aids in relationship to the order of the horse's footfalls to improve the influence those aids will have on the horse.

Achieving "Rider Feel"

There are several stages to become a feeling rider that Sarah covered.

- Mechanical period
- Practice
- Power of Observation
- Be Honest, but Not Critical
- "Off-Horse" Learning
- Staying Inspired

Demonstrations Regarding "Rider Feel"

Leigh and Matador Demonstrated Alignment and Influence.

Leigh Romano volunteered to help demonstrate rider alignment about which parts of the rider influence which parts of the horse. Beth Geier volunteered her horse Matador, who Leigh rode for this demonstration.

- **Alignment** – several aspects of proper alignment were discussed. The rider's shoulder, hip and heel should be vertically aligned. The back should be straight (not arched, not rounded) with the pelvis in a neutral (vertical) position (i.e., the seat bones should not be pointing back nor forward). The rider's head should be held level, looking forward between the horse's ears, not looking downwards at the horse's head. The shoulders are relaxed and down. Elbows should be carried at the side with forearms and reins making a straight line towards the horse's mouth. Align the middle of the body with the withers and then think of aligning the horse's neck with his withers. The rider should have equal weight between the two seat bones.
- **Influence** - To assist the audience, Leigh had color coded tape on her arms, legs, back and front. Matador was similarly color cod-

ed on his neck, shoulder, legs, and haunches.

- Rider's Arms influence the horse's shoulders forward.
 - The fingers and wrist influence the poll and jaw flexion.
 - The forearms through the elbow influence the base of the horse's neck and position of the neck.
- Rider's back influences the back end of the horse and the haunches.
- Rider's leg influences the horse from the shoulders backwards.
 - The rider's calf influences the horse's hind leg on the side it's used. When applied to the rib cage it can cause forward or lateral movement of the hind legs.
 - The rider's thigh affects the horse's shoulders (for example, you can restrict movement of the shoulders by squeezing both thighs, or you can cause the horse to turn if you press your thigh on one side). Typically, your thigh should be lightly draped when not being applied as an aid.
- Rider's Seat sets the line of travel and can follow the horse's movement. If the seat is "stilled" (no longer follows), it can restrict the horse's movement (i.e. as part of a half halt).
 - The rider should first strive to "mirror the horse," then eventually can ask the horse to "mirror the rider" (i.e. first

- you should have your seat follow the horse and later learn to influence the horse's movement with your seat).
- Rider's Hips can influence direction. Also, eventually when the seat is "educated" then the rider can "swing his hips" more or less with the horse's swing to encourage a longer stride or more collection (i.e. a shorter, higher stride).
 - Activating the Core and Anchoring the Seat - The underarm muscles ("lats") should be activated which will anchor the seat (Sarah put her hand in the rider's armpit and asked the rider to push her hand downwards). The stomach should be pulled towards the spine to activate the core.

Donna & Haint Demonstrated Timing – Donna Baxter had volunteered to demonstrate timing on her horse, Haint. Donna is a western Dressage rider who applies dressage techniques to the western discipline.

Order of Footfall – the first exercise was to determine if Donna could identify the footfall of each hoof at the walk. She was asked to identify by voicing "Now" when the front left hoof hit the ground, then the front right, then each hind hoof. When it was established that she could correctly identify those, then the next exercise was undertaken to use timing of aids based on those footfalls. (When you do these yourself, you should

have a friend watch to assure you are correctly identifying them.)

Walk to Halt Timing. Walking to the left in a circle. Donna was asked to call out the right (R-outside) and left (L-inside) footfalls of the front (F) hooves in two sets of three step segments as follows: Call out 'Right-Left-Right', skip, then call out 'Right-Left-Right'; again. When that was correct, then Donna was asked to call out the two sets again, but this time halt on the last call by simply stepping into the right stirrup with minimal or no rein aid. Donna was asked to visualize anchoring the outside hoof to the group with the weight in the stirrup. So, it was R-L-R, skip, R-L-Halt. Donna executed this without a problem. The same exercise was repeated using the hind (H) hooves.

Judy Brown and Audaz: An Individual Clinic Lesson – Regarding my own experience at the clinic, Sarah asked me to identify what I most needed help with. I identified that I had too much arch in my back, that my right leg tended to creep forward, and that I had difficulty keeping my horse's shoulder from falling out when traveling right. This helped Sarah to structure my lesson, by helping me apply some of the ingredients of rider feel towards solving these problems. First, she helped me improve my alignment by reducing the arch in my back and rotating my pelvis into a neutral/vertical position. She had me put my hands under my seat bones to feel their orientation as I moved my back from an arched, to a neutral, to a rounded position. This helped me feel when my seat bones were vertical and my back straighter. I also noted that in this position, by seat bones were lighter and exerted

less pressure on my hands. Sarah also suggested I look to see if the seam on the sides of my breeches were vertically positioned as they will mirror my pelvis. She also placed her hands on my stomach and back and had me pull my stomach towards my back to activate my core. Then, she had me stand in my stirrups to demonstrate that we were now vertically aligned and could do that without falling forward or back. Then she helped me get control of my horse's shoulders by spiraling my own shoulders up and inwards in the direction of the circle in line with the circle's angle (and no more) which led my horse's shoulder onto the line of the circle and helped him to fill out my outside rein. This worked great. Now, I need to practice these alignment changes to make them more of a habit.

Some suggestions shared with a few other riders included:

If Haunches are Falling in at Canter – Use light renvers (haunches-out) aids to bring the haunches back in line. You can also do canter circles in renvers and then return to the proper alignment. You can also lift your shoulders up and turn in slightly to position the horse more into a shoulder-fore position.

Canter Collection – let your inside leg/thigh hang/drape on the horses side and then lightly brush your spur back and up along his side to engage his pelvic floor. This should stimulate an energized, but higher and shorter canter stride.

For more information about Sarah Martin and her training approach, you can contact her or purchase her DVD series on "Teaching the Rider to Feel" via her website: <http://www.sarahmartindressage.com/> 🐾 🐾 🐾

To do this she color coordinated the parts of the rider, Leigh Romano, to the parts of the horse, Beth Geier's Matador, in corresponding colors.

Pointing out that learning anything is mechanical first and automatic much later, Sarah shared many of her techniques for turning mechanics into automatic responses. She taught riders to know by feel where each of their horse's feet were (planting or lifting) in the walk, trot, and canter. How do you use that knowledge to make smoother transitions and more effective lateral movements? Sarah illustrated how each part of the rider's body influences specific parts of the horse's body, and illustrated how a rider can use that knowledge to continually help the horse be in balance—a space he craves.

Sarah illustrated how each part of the rider's body influences specific parts of the horse's body, and illustrated how a rider can use that knowledge to continually help the horse be in balance—a space he craves.

Donna Baxter riding her Foundation Quarter Horse, Haint, served as a Western Dressage demo rider for working through feeling and knowing where each of Haint's feet were, and how to use that knowledge to create exceedingly smooth transitions. Haint came to the Symposium already responsive and tuned-in to Donna's aids, but with application of Sarah's "left, right, left, pause, left,

right, left, halt" we saw Haint learn to step to halt like he already knew the steps of the dance rather than slamming on the brakes. "Left, right, left" was spoken as Haint's front feet touched the ground, and worked even better when timed to the hind legs. At one point, Haint's foot dangled in air just waiting for direction from Donna.

Diana Sweers and her Gypsy Vanner x Arab X Cobb, Forest, began their session moving with minimal energy and without a frame. Through the application of appropriate use of inside and outside aids, the little guy transformed before our eyes into a forward, connected, and moving-over-his-topline Dressage horse. Forest had all the right muscles firing. We could literally see a big difference. People all around me were saying, "I just love that horse!"

Shannon Lemons served as a demo rider on her Arab x Paint, Shaman, for Sarah's instruction about how

to get a horse to lift his back. Shannon's horse by conformation has a tall croup and a high head set, leaving the back naturally lower. So getting his back level took some work. Sarah, with Shannon doing a great job riding her lovely boy, showed us that getting Shaman to lift his back starts with working him with his poll BELOW his withers. This creates the position where energy will naturally

travel from the hind quarters over the back and to the bit. When the energy starts traveling this way, the back will naturally come up, and we witnessed this happen. But we observed that Shaman liked that heavy-in-the-front feel and wanted to stay there. Instead of this being viewed as a bad thing, Sarah said that this is quite natural and asked Shannon to then move Shaman forward. This forward movement resulted in Shaman flowing forward with his back actually above level in an incredibly lovely frame.

The symposium was gifted with a variety of attendees. Students of dressage at all levels came, as well as people from the eventing and up-and-coming Western Dressage disciplines.

Sarah encouraged riders to take responsibility for their own journey and suggested reading articles, watching DVDs, journaling, and writing down their thoughts. She has a DVD series available, "Teaching the Rider to Feel" which goes over the concepts discussed in the Symposium. She also recommended reading Tara Nolan's new book "Out of the Saddle: 9 Steps for Improving Your Riding," and that riders take advantage of the Journaling/Lesson Log capability available in the free website www.UnbridledRider.com.

Riders take lesson after lesson working to improve their riding and train their horses. This day gave me a framework to place the many pieces of information I've gotten over the years with new tools I couldn't wait to apply. Even today I found myself saying "left, right, left, pause, left, right, halt" ... and it worked!



Protecting Your Horses, Disaster Preparedness Review

From the Colorado Equine Clinic, Littleton, Colorado

Everyone at the clinic has been watching the smoke rise from the foothills and hoping for the best for the people and animals that have been affected by the recent fire. It got us thinking of what all of us should be aware of if disaster strikes close to home. Not only should you have a personal/family plan for handling these situations but animal owners should take the time to include the animals they love and want to keep safe. Please take the time to read the following Disaster Preparedness Review.

You, the horse owner, are ultimately responsible for the survival and well being of your animals. If at all possible, avoid the disaster in the first place. The following are some ways to prepare your animals, and yourself, for a disaster.

1. **Identify your animals with**
 - permanent brand cards
 - brands, tattoos, microchips
 - current photographs
 - have tags attached to all halters
2. **Have a list of prearranged places**
 - where you can obtain veterinary care
 - with housing, feed, and shelter for your animals
3. **Develop a personal emergency preparedness plan.**
4. **Practice evacuation, establish a family meeting place.**
5. **Develop a list of phone contacts outside your area.**
6. **Set up a telephone tree to help neighbors and friends.**
7. **Train horses for transportation.**
8. **Have a disaster kit for humans and animals.**
9. **Have "HELP" and "OK" signs which can be seen from the road by disaster workers.**

There are multiple types of disasters for which you should be prepared. Some of these disasters include floods, thunder and lightning storms, tornadoes, winter storms, and most relevant recently, wildfires.

Dr. Barbara Page was the first woman in Colorado to practice as an equine veterinarian, spending nine years at Littleton Large Animal Clinic. In 1988 she started a private practice and built the Colorado Equine Clinic, PC in 1995, where she continues to practice with passion for veterinary medicine and a commitment of service to all horse owners. Her special interests are the foot and diseases of the musculoskeletal system. Dr. Page can be contacted at 303.791.4747.

Cheers!

Somerset Farms Ride A Test—Test A Wine Offers a Novel Format for Learning

By Kim Lampert



Stephanie Marguiles and our judge Simone Ahern

Trying to teach dressage can be like trying to teach someone how a strawberry tastes, said USDF “L” graduate Simone Ahern. “It’s so much by feel and it can be so different from what it actually looks like.”

Fortunately for the riders at the first of a series of Ride A Test—Test A Wine clinics at *Somerset Farms* in Longmont, the judge, trainers, a professional video crew, wine—and even strawberries, were all on hand.

The unique format of the clinic (see sidebar) allowed riders the advantage of reviewing their ride visually with a judge, working to improve it with a trainer and then the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned. The clinic idea was created by Kim Lampert and Susan DiSylvia of *ProHorse Productions*. It was beautifully executed and improved upon by Petra Warlimont, Channett Chemnitz, of *Somerset Farms*, and Simone Ahern of

Sun Prairie Stables. Participants and auditors enjoyed a buffet of a variety of wines and nibbles.

“If you ride any movement and have the capability of seeing it right then and there when you still have a memory of what it felt like you can have an even better understanding of what it takes to improve,” said Ahern. “I just can’t say how important it is to see what it looks like, what you’re trying to do.”

Bonnie Madine, who rode Roshambo, her 8-year-old American Warmblood Sporthorse, in the clinic, agreed. “The immediate feedback on the video was very helpful,” she said. “How the ride felt was still fresh on my mind, so to be able to compare the feeling to the visual was super-informative. Then, to see and hear what the issues were and immediately go practice was great. All clinics should be like this!”

A picture’s worth a thousand words. Sometimes it’s a four-letter one. “People are so amazed when they see videos of themselves,” said Ahern. “What they feel and then what they see on the big screen can be completely different. For some riders it can be a huge revelation.” For some that can be a good revelation. For others, well, it can ensure job security for trainers.

Ahern then strategically selected movements she felt the rider had the capacity to improve in the mini lesson with *Somerset* assistant trainer Channett Chemnitz.

“Channett did an amazing job,” said Ahern. “Even though she only had 10-15 minutes with the riders (most of whom she had never worked with), she made a positive difference that I could see with every single one. Now that really shows the knowledge and understanding she has of teaching and training the training scale.”

“The setup of the clinic was awesome,” said Ahern. “It was the most fun I’ve ever had judging. It was really nice to have the rider right there and be able to say ‘this is why you got this score, now go and work on it.’”

In addition to the video and vino, “it was really helpful to have the judge right there to expound on her shorthand comments,” said participant Gayle Udall.

The horses had varied reactions to the video playback. One was scared witless of the tiny moving horse on the



Rider Meredith Searcy, videographer Susan DiSylvia, and Trainer Petra Warlimont look at Meredith's instant replay on the big screen.

TV. Another seemed rather put out he didn't appear as Totilas-like on screen as he did in his mind. Others seemed quite impressed with themselves. Ears pricked toward the TV, heads cocked, they wondered "Who is that good looking horse?!"

With DVDs of their rides, participants can review their performance at home. "I think I'll save that for when

I'm drinking heavily," joked rider Udall.

Though riders performed at a variety of proficiencies, all perfected one movement, according to the judge. The toasting she said, was done in perfect form.

Be on the lookout for the next Ride A Test—Test A Wine at Somersetfarms.net. 🐾 🐾 🐾



Jenn Alber finished with her Ride-A-Test, receives her Somerset logo wine glass for the wine tasting.

Ride A Test—Test A Wine Format

1. Enter at A, halt, salute.
2. Perform test of choice while filmed by professional crew.
3. Judge explains scoring, movement-by-movement.
4. Review test on video screen, while still in saddle, as judge comments on test.
5. Judge selects one or two movements for rider to focus on in mini lesson.
6. Work with trainer for about 15 minutes.
7. Perform sections of the test for judge that include those movements worked on in the mini lesson.
8. Review improvement with judge.
9. Halt, salute, receive commemorative *Somerset Farms* wineglass and recording of ride.
10. Toast to your horse, your pals and the fact that it's early in the season and you have time to improve. (Can be performed sitting or rising)
11. Watch test at leisure at home.
12. (Perhaps test more wine.)



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 Centaur newsletter only - \$35.00 Life Membership - \$750.00

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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):

- | | | |
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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) _____

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In Memoriam

Boris, my best friend and hiking buddy for 15 years.
We climbed a lot of mountains together and now you have gone to the highest one. You will always be missed. -Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez



OMNIBUS CORRECTIONS

- Page A-8 Add:
Platte River Chapter, Laura Speer, 970-371-2934, riversidestables_evans@yahoo.com
Pikes Peak Chapter, Simone Windeler, 719-287-2040, simonedressage@gmail.com
Change:
Colorado Springs Chapter Patricia Leech, President, 719-749-2860, pat.leech@skybeam.com
- Page A-11 Ellene Kloepfer 303-523-019
- Page C-5 August 25-26 Utah Dressage Society Annual Show I & II
- Page C-7 May 12 Mariah Farms Schooling Show- not the 19th
- Page C-29 Dressage for the Cure Warm Up and Dressage for the Cure at the Peak now being presented by 2 White Feet, Inc.
- Page C-29 Licensee is now 2 White Feet, Inc, Heather Petersen, Owner
- Page C-30 Checks should now be drawn to 2 White Feet and all proceeds will go to Sense of Security.
- Page C-35 Jane Ayers has been replaced by Ida Anderson Norris (S), Maine/Florida
- Page C-35 Technical Delegate is Eva Maria Adolphi (r), Utah
- Page C-43 Second Judge is Eleanor Stine-Masek (S), Arizona
- Page C-63 Dressage at the Peak II Summer Warm-Up and Dressage at the Peak II Summer now presented by 2 White Feet, Inc.
- Page C-64 Checks should now be drawn to 2 White Feet.

USEF Membership Form has been changed. You can now obtain a non-member adult amateur card. Go to www.USEF.org to get the newest one.



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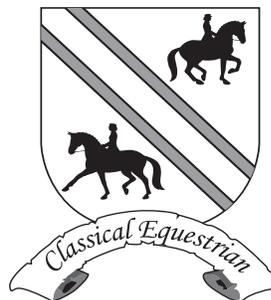
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