

Straight Forward News

California Dressage Society, Marin Chapter May/June/July 2008

Marin Chapter 2008 Dressage Shows

I know it's only May but show season is in full swing. The Marin Chapter has 3 great shows to participate in this year so get your entries in and support the Chapter. If you would like to volunteer please contact the show manager.

Sunday, May 25, 2008: USEF-USDF-CDS
Fairwind Farm, Santa Rosa
Judge: Creeky Routson (S)
Manager: Kathy Goldstein (415)892-4560

Friday, June 27, 2008: USEF-USDF-CDS
Riverside Equestrian Center, Petaluma
Judge: Mary Grace Davidson (S)
Manager: Karin Piper (707)338-4184

Saturday, August 17, 2008: CDS
Riverside Equestrian Center, Petaluma
Judge: Sue Curry Shaffer (R)
Manager: Heather Pollard-Krause (415)
215-8354

Check www.marindressage.org for official prize list and more information.

Thanks to Virginia Chatham at Bits and Bridles (webmaster@bitsandbridles.com) you can visit our website at <http://www.marindressage.org>. Check it out.

Rule Change: Effective 12/1/08 a 48" whip will be allowed in the show ring again

Chapter Business

The Chapter had its Annual Awards Dinner at Wildfox Restaurant on March 11th. Approximately 15 members attended. It's always fun to meet new members and catch up with others. My husband often refers to my usual barn group as my "Cult" so it was good to do a little cross pollinating with other barns.

Jeannette Derammelaere has requested that the McIsaac's, Hungerford's and Francis's please contact her to arrange pick up of their awards. You can contact her at 415-892-6819.

The Chapter currently has a \$2700 balance in its bank account.

The Chapter is working on scheduling a "Ride a Test Clinic" with a local area judge. It will be held at Baywood Equestrian Center in Fairfax. If you are interested in riding in the clinic please email Ellie Kennedy at armstrong_ellie@yahoo.com

Adult Amateur Clinic

The Chapter had a drawing for the CDS Amateur Clinic at the Awards dinner in March and Julie Dobbs was the winner. The clinician was Rachel Saavedra and it was held at Leap of Faith Farm in Walnut Creek on May 1-4th.

Dear Marin Chapter CDS,

Thank you for such a great experience! Rachel is a great instructor and really helped improve everyone's riding with unique and new ideas to think about. She gave me new perspectives in how I ride and how I see other dressage riders. Her demonstration of her Grand Prix horse was one of the main highlights of the clinic, too. Not only was training with Rachel fun, but the facility, Leap of Faith Farms in Walnut Creek, was great. I loved all the services available, like the feeding, turn outs, and hot water. It was so nice to have the option of turning out your horse and not having to worry about mucking and feeding. The food was also great, especially because we didn't have to leave the barn. Thank you CDS for making my first clinic experience such a fun one! I hope to do another one in the future.

-Julie Dobbs, Marin CDS

BARN NEWS

Congratulation to Karen Piper on the arrival of Winston on St. Patrick's day.

Winston is by HS Warado and out of a TB Mare, Proud and Likely. He is already very flashy being black with a white blaze and socks.



Winston

Congratulations to Camille Kusin on the purchase of her new horse, Domino. Domino is a 9 year old Westphalian chestnut gelding, 16-2 hands and showing 4th level. Welcome to Rocking JR Ranch!

Susan Pommer wishes Francine Castner a great show season this year. She will be competing Aidan at Training level. They are a great pair and have been preparing diligently for their first show season together.

Luke-aka L.Umonia-and Susan received their silver metal last year and will be competing at I1 this year.

Good luck!

Rebecca Cushman and her Danish gelding Laneur debuted at Grand Prix at Yarra Yarra in March--their first show since Rebecca broke her back last year. Given the trials of the last year, Rebecca was delighted to receive a qualifying score of 60.8%!! Rebecca is back to a full training schedule, now operating out of Fairwind Farm. She looks forward to a full show roster on her own and client owned horses! Rebecca is currently accepting new horses and riders into training, please call for more information. (415)717-1775

Dog Adoption Opportunity

Rebecca Cushman is currently fostering dogs rescued from high kill shelters for Anderson Valley Rescue. The dogs Becky is fostering have been exposed to horses, cats, and the wildlife typically found at our horse barns.....sparing potential adopters the trepidation of guessing whether the dogs may be appropriate to join their equestrian community. If you are looking for a new pooch, please call Becky to see if there is a possible match for you and your horsey lifestyle. (415)717-1775

Trailer Safety

Written by Kathy Goldstein

Show season is upon us and as everyone gets their horses ready to start up a new year there is always one thing that gets neglected, your horse trailer. You make sure your truck has gas and oil but have you had your trailer inspected lately? How about the tire pressure, brakes, flooring and those not so pretty rust spots? It's something we all tend to neglect but the outcome can be catastrophic. Recently I had to take care of some trailer repair and found a great person to recommend. He does everything from checking the floor and taking care of all the electrical to touching up the paint inside and out.

Contact John Saundan – Detaining

2520 East Railroad Avenue
Penngrove
707-795-0672

He did a great job on my trailer and he does trucks also. Don't forget to take of one of the most important things about showing getting there safely.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Imported 11 year old Holsteiner mare by Monsum out of Waleska. Lovely athletic grey mare standing at 16.2. Solid second level with changes. Great amateur horse. Easy to sit. Willing to work. Easy to take to shows. Safe, sound. Not marish. Has also jumped and foaled a lovely bay gelding who is now 3 years old. \$35k.

Imported 12 year old Hanoverian gelding by Falkland x Lanthan. Gorgeous black 16.3 hand gelding with three good gaits. Schooling Grand Prix and showing Intermediaire I. Very easy to sit and an enjoyable ride. Excellent Young Rider prospect. Extensive show resume with many wins.

Zinedine: 4 year old KWPN gelding by Kojak. Currently showing training level with scores in the 70's. Uphill, elastic, flashy dark bay. Incredible temperment. FEI potential. \$60,000

Zuccherro: 4 year old KWPN Bay gelding by Quattro. Fancy mover, very elastic, sweet and kind temperment. FEI potential. Just started under saddle. \$40,000.

Contact Christine Rivlin-Henke if you are interested in either of these horses. axelmorgan@aol.com or 707-763-2066 www.christinerivlindressage.com

Mozart: Imported 16.3, 15yo bay Danish gelding, proven I-1 horse with scores to 72%, now showing Grand Prix. EASY tempis, lateral, pirouettes. Kind, willing, gentleman for amateurs and pros alike. Sound. Current FEI passport. See videos at www.paradigmsporthorse.com. Becky (415)717-1775

Schumacher double bridle, black with white trim, horse size. Near new condition. Over \$400 new, asking \$250. (415)717-1775

Judy Frey is offering board for one horse at her home to keep her gelding company. She has a stall with an attached half acre pasture. Full court outdoor dressage arena. Hay night & morning. 6 miles west of Petaluma.

\$300.00 per month. Contact: Judy at jsjvfrey@juno.com or (707)765-5781

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- ***May 24 – Fairwind Farm – Contact Dawn Benson (925) 719-1615
- *May 25 – Marin Chapter Show at Fairwind Farm – Judge:Creeky Routson(R)
- *** June 6-8 – Shelly Siegel/ Regional Adult Amateur Central Competition – Judge J. Ayers, P. Lacy, J. Roth Conotact Connie Davenport (530)265-0950
- ***June 21-22 – Fairwind Farm, Judge - Louise Koch (S) Contact Dawn Benson (925) 719-1615
- ***June 27, 2008 – Marin Chapter Show at Riverside Equestrian Center -Judge: Mary Grace Davidson (S)
- *August 16 – Marin Chapter Show at Riverside Equestrian Center Judge - Sue Curry Shaffer (R)
- ***August 30-31 - Fairwind Farm, Judge – Jan Curtis (S) Contact Dawn Benson (925) 719-1615

SHOW NEWS

As I said earlier, show season is in full swing and I'm thrilled to be all qualified for Annual Show. I've seen many Marin members out at various shows.

Michelle Syufy was spotted at the March Yarra Yarra show in March showing her horse Galliano S 4th Level.

Golden State Dressage - Rancho Murieta April 5-8

Maggie Andrews competed in her first CDI on her horse TIC Tac for the Jr. FEI, and received a 2nd in the warmup and a 4th and 5th in the FEI Team and Individual Tests. Maggie is now 16 and hopes to make the Jr. FEI team next year.

Laura Andrews came home from college at UCSB to show her horse Perception at PSG, and placed well in large classes. Laura rode in a clinic with Axel Steiner at Fairwind Farm and hopes she will have time to compete for Young Riders next year.

Chelsea Kaplan showed her horse Noah at 3rd and 4th levels, and got a 1st, 2nd and 3rd. "Noah" is for sale to a good home.

Both Wendy Iversen and Maggie Clancy got scores at 2nd level towards their bronze medals and placed well in several classes. Wendy rode her Morgan gelding "Brighton" and Maggie Clancy rode both of her horses Leonardo and Sorbet.

Christine Rivlin-Henke brought a barn full of horses and several clients to Murieta and happily everyone won a class. Valentino owned and ridden by Chris is keeping her 72% average in tact at second level. I'm trying to catch up to her on my horse Sanset but I have a long way to go.

Stacy Zwergel showed Rushmore owned Lynn Shaughnessy, Zinidine owned by Wendy Roberts and Mimosa owned by Michele Martin Training Level. Casey Thompson and Dondaly showed Training Level. Chris showed Marso, owned by Laurel Brown, 2nd Level. Cooper, owned by Janet Byrum, was shown by Stacy Zwergel 2nd Level.

Susan Sutton's new horse Frederick was shown 1st Level by Emily Sorenson with scores in the 70's.

Straight Forward News is published tri-monthly and sent out to all CDS Marin Chapter Members. Contributions to this newsletter are welcome and encouraged. Please contact your editor with anything of interest. Ellie Armstrong Kennedy Phone: 415-328-4559 or Email: armstrong_ellie@yahoo.com

Correct Dressage Training & Solid Basics for the Show Ring

There is a difference between correct dressage training and 'poodle dressage'. Find out what that is and how the Judge knows the difference.

Written by Ivetta Harte "L" Judge Graduate with 'distinction'

Do you know the difference between a good scoring dressage circle and a bad one? If you will ride a round 20-meter circle starting and ending on the correct letter, will that be enough to score an 8? The answer is no. Actually, even though geometry and accuracy plays an important role in the show arena, the most important thing that the dressage judges are looking for are “correct basics and training that is on the right track.” Start thinking this way and showcase your horse’s solid basics to get an 8 on your next test! Here is how:

Correct dressage training or “poodle dressage”?

Dressage is progressive training that develops the horse’s muscles in the correct way. “Poodle dressage” does the opposite. Even when your horse is standing, a dressage judge can see if your training methods are correct or not: For example, a bulging under-neck muscle is a sign of resistance. If the horse is wide behind the ears and narrow in front of the withers, that’s another sign of incorrect dressage training. One of the main goals of correct dressage training is relaxation. If the neck and top line muscles are not correctly developed, that points to the conclusion that neck the muscles are tight and

resistant during training, then head and jaw muscles are tight, rigid as well, then the horse can’t accept the bit. (Try to tighten your neck and talk at the same time, you’ll see that you can’t relax your jaw and lips) Thus, even if the horse is in the dressage frame, his incorrect muscle development shows that the horse resists the bit. Incorrect muscle development of the horse, particularly of the neck and top line, will help to pinpoint “poodle dressage.” Nothing can hide a strong under-neck muscle, a muscle of resistance from the judge, but with correct dressage training you’ll be proud to showcase the correctly developed muscles of the topline of your horse.

It takes about 6 months or more to tone up muscles. That is a reason why it is so important to train correctly every day. But how do you know if you are on the correct path? Dressage classical training methods were refined for centuries as is evident from the book of a Greek general Xenophon (ca. 400 B.C.) To ensure classical principles in our present day, a Dressage Training Pyramid, or Training Scale, has evolved. These steps are a general guidance of the correct development of the dressage horse. The correctly developed musculature protects the joints, tendons, and ligaments and contributes to the horse’s longevity and soundness.

Use the Dressage Training Pyramid as your dressage show guide:

1. Rhythm Correct, clear rhythm of your horse’s hoof beats shows to the judge that you horse is sound and fit as an athlete who belongs in the show ring – a good start to score an “8”! Basically, rhythm refers to the horse’s soundness: lame or off horses don’t have a steady rhythm. Horses that are not relaxed, whose

muscles are tense will also display an unclear rhythm. As well, some younger horses who simply don't have enough strength to hold the difficult figures for a long time can start to break their clear rhythm. Rhythm is a sequence of footfalls and timing of a pure walk, pure trot, and pure canter. Rhythm should be expressed with energy and suitable, consistent tempo.

2. Relaxation. Relaxed muscles of your horse's back, shoulders and neck will send a clear message to the judge that you are ready to score an "8"! Relaxation is a mental and physical state of a horse. Does your horse have "relaxation"? The first place to look for it is at the horse's back – is it swinging or is it stiff? When a horse's back is relaxed and swinging with a rhythm of footfalls, the rider also has a comfortable place to sit in the saddle. Another place to look for relaxation is the horse's shoulders– if a horse is scrambling and trotting around like a sewing machine, the shoulders don't have time to relax. Give your horse time to relax its shoulders by slowing your horse down and through repetition of simpler figures. Then you want to check the neck of your horse and see that it's arched in the soft manner and that the horse is stretching slightly downwards. If the horse's neck is tense then the under-muscle is working too much, developing the dreaded under-neck. When relaxed, the horse accepts rider's aids, moves with a supple back, and can bend through the body, lengthening and shortening his strides willingly. Relaxation is a trust that the rider gains with many hours of patient training.

3. Connection. Steady and even contact from your horse's mouth to your hands clearly shows to the judge that you successfully developed a clear language

with your horse that is worth a score of 8. The judge doesn't want to see any of the "toddler hissy fits" such as tossing head, dunking behind the bit, ripping the reins out of the rider's hands, or tilting the head to evade contact. All of these show the judge that you are still developing the language with your horse, but you are not there yet. Connection is an acceptance of the bit through acceptance of the aids. If you can show the judge that you can keep steady contact when changing directions – you are definitely on the way to score an "8;" however, the ultimate exam of your contact and connection are transitions. Oh yes, horses, just like us, get excited, anxious, and even freeze up in transitions. If you can keep the dialog going and reassure your partner that you are a solid team during the transitions, you'll seal the deal to score an "8." Connection gives a fluent interaction between the horse and rider with appropriate response from the horse. Chewing the bit and a moist mouth are good signs of elastic contact.

Every judge knows how to recognize a horse that is not on the bit. For the lower levels of dressage it is of utmost importance to have "steady contact" regardless of the horse's frame. The horse's frame comes to play only at 2nd level. Prior to that, judges are more concerned with steady and consistent contact. When a horse's head position changes all the time, it's a sign that it doesn't have steady contact. Try to develop steady head and neck carriage and steady bit contact with a horse and only then position the horse head slightly in front of the vertical. There are many mistakes and ways to be "not on the bit."

- Horses above the bit that repeatedly toss their head
- Horses that jerk the reins out of the rider's hands
- Horses that are bracing against the

rider's hands, putting lots of pressure and tightening their necks, that result in the use of an under-neck muscle.

- Horses that tilt their heads, accepting contact only on one side of their mouth but not on the other.
- Horses that are behind the vertical with a low neck
- Horses that are behind the vertical with a broken neck-line in the 3rd vertebra, which shows evasion from the bit, are the worst fault and must be scored the lowest.

4. Impulsion. If you thought that showing the first 3 things to the judge will get you an "8," think again. Impulsion basically gives the air time needed in trot and canter. Some horses are born with it; others need years of gymnastic exercisers to develop it. It doesn't matter how you get your impulsion: through breeding or through further training, you will see that it can be a quality that is difficult to control... and that is exactly why judges will award you extra points for having it. Everything is easier with a slower, lazier moving trot, yet, when you ask a horse to move more forward with more energy – the contact might become stronger, the horse is harder to sit, and so on. That is the reason why "impulsion" is in 4th place: it should be developed only after the horse is relaxed and has a steady contact. Start increasing and asking for more impulsion slowly, so you will not lose "relaxation" and "connection". Impulsion comes with an increased energy and thrust; eager, energetic, yet controlled thrust generated from the hindquarters. The horse's desire to carry himself forward, suppleness of his back and engagement of the hindquarters that are also necessary for the development of the medium paces.

5. Straightness. The famous artist Leonardo da Vinci was ambidextrous—amazingly, he could write equally well with

both hands. Develop the same symmetry with your horse to score an 8. By nature every horse is crooked: hollow on one side and stiff on his other side. Horses use one side of their body differently from the other one, just like people. With gymnastic dressage exercises, horses can develop their symmetry, becoming straight. A horse is straight when the footfalls of the forehand and the hindquarters are appropriately aligned on straight and curved lines. A horse shouldn't pop the shoulder or go haunches in-- that is not straight. Straightness is an improved alignment and balance.

6. Collection starts at 2nd level and continues to improve through Grand Prix level. Although there are many different levels of collection, lowering of the inside hip is a must for any level of collection, that is one of the requirements that a dressage judge will look for along with increased engagement, lightness of the forehand, self-carriage. The horse shows collection when he shifts his center of his mass backwards, on his hind end. That results in light contact and increased mobility of the forehand. The horse lowers his hindquarters and appears to be more uphill. Without collection any tests at 2nd level and above will be considered "poodle dressage," ie, riding tricks without correct dressage training.

Accuracy and correct geometry. Only after you show all of the qualities mentioned above, accuracy and correct geometry come into play in the show ring. Without correct basics such as 1. Rhythm; 2. Relaxation; 3. Connection; 4. Impulsion; 5. Straightness; and later 6. Collection – the rider and her horse are not on the right track and probably doing "poodle dressage" even if they do all the tricks on the right letters with the right geometry.

