



e:news SALUTE

July 2009 August

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SWVADA News...

Licensed Show The SWVADA Licensed Show was a big success. Nancy Stone, the show's manager would like to share the following: "I want to thank all of the competitors for turning out for the annual licensed show. We had a lovely spring day to celebrate dressage. This year, thanks to some wonderful donations from businesses who support the horse industry, we had some special awards to give out to our competitors. Congratulations and thanks to the participants of the 'best braids' award, Sarah Tweedie, presenting Pirate Jenny and Claudia Lokant, presenting Classical Aires. Claire G. McGill with R. Malachi VT was our Adult Amateur with the highest score in the morning and Megan Jones with Bertone VT was our Jr/YR with the highest score of the morning. The afternoon Adult Amateur high score went to Caroline Stephens with Caruso and the Jr/YR high score went to Megan Jones with Kadance. The credit for such a lovely show truly goes to all of our hard working, dedicated and cheerful volunteers. When you have such great volunteers, it makes managing the show a rewarding job. Thank you all for such lovely day!"

Our competitors also enjoyed the day evidenced by the following positive feedback we received:

"Just wanted to say thank you for putting on such a nice show. Perfect day, and it was very nice. The new ideas

you all incorporated were great"
Tobie Bentz

I got away Sat. without letting you know how much I enjoyed coming to your show. You put on a well organized, well run show that was a joy to attend. I have been to many bigger name shows that were not nearly as well done. That facility is quite nice, especially for new-to-the-scene young horses, with adequately decorated rings and well maintained grounds with good footing. I will certainly be looking forward to coming to any more shows that you might have in the future."

Barbara Hedgepath

"Thanks so much for all your hard work putting on the show. I had a great day and really appreciate SWVADA putting forth the effort to have a recognized show so close to home. Congratulations on a well run and awesome competition!"

Sarah Tweedie

Dressage at Lexington will be held July 10th - 12th at the Virginia Horse Center. SWVADA is participating in the Progressive Barn Party on Friday night by providing desserts that are prepared by Jan Keener. (Donations for these desserts may given to Laura Nelson at the show.) SWVADA members Laura Nelson, Gail Stanley, Meredith McGrath and Sue Halterman have formed a team for the SHAC Amateur Challenge. Go Team! If you are planning on showing at this
(continued on the next page)

"The horse you get off is not the same as the horse you got on; it is your job as a rider to ensure that as often as possible the change is for the better."

Anonymous

event, you can request to be stabled with other SWVADA members to get in on the fun.

A Day of Dressage Fun Immerse yourself in dressage on August 22 at GHPEC. Whether you are new to dressage training, a seasoned competitor, or a wise retiree, SWVADA invites you to Dressage Fun Day at GHPEC from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The planned events include a variety of educational and entertaining demonstrations ***free of charge***. We will have demonstration riders with educational reviews from your local L judges; training sessions in lunging, long lining and lunging horse and rider; as well as presenting horses in hand and evaluating confirmation. Freestyle and team riding exhibitions are cer-

tain to entertain. Educational booths and vendors will also be present. David Young, Master Saddler, will be available for saddle fittings at additional cost. For more information contact Mary at mary_mcfee@hotmail.com or Beckie at beck56@cox.net For last minute updates and in the event of inclement weather, please consult our web site www.swvada.org

Roanoke Valley Horse Show Thanks to Lynn Jendrowski, who performed a musical freestyle on her horse Moud, the spectators at the RVHS got to enjoy nice helping of dressage in addition to their usual horse fare. Kudos to Lynn!

“There is no instant dressage. One should count in years, not in days.”
Bengt Ljungquist

Upcoming SWVADA Show and Clinic Dates

July 4- Schooling Show GHPEC Manger: Bob Whitehurst Secretary: Janet Brown

August 22 Clinic Committee: Mary McFee, Laura Nelson,

September 12 Clinic w/ Harriet Peterson GHPEC Contact: Laura Nelson for more information

October 3 Schooling Show GHPEC Manager: Maeve Crowgey, Secretary: Heather Hurst Weaver

Important Reminders for Competitors at GHPEC

Please remember to use the TRAILER entrance at the park. Signs are clearly posted. This entrance was created for your safety. Also competitors who opt to use stalls MUST clean them before departing. Additionally, bedding materials, such as sawdust or shavings, are NOT allowed. And please send any show or clinic entries to the event's secretary **NEVER, EVER** send entries to SWVADA's Post Office Box!

Fodder from the USDF

The USDF is collecting tips from members for an upcoming feature article. They want to know what has helped you: ride better, improve your scores at shows, find more time to ride, balance work and family with riding, be a better horseman? Dressage, training, sport psychology, stable management, fitness, nutrition, time management - you name it. If you have had an “light bulb” moment, they want to hear about it. Email your tip to Jennifer Bryant at jbryant@usdf.org

Do you know a USDF youth member who deserves to be recognized for their volunteer service? The USDF is looking for those youth members who not only put in that special effort with their horse, but can be counted on to help others. Nominate them to win the USDF Youth Volunteer of the Year Award, presented by The Paddock Saddlery. Nominees must be current USDF members 21 years or younger. Nominations must be submitted by August 31st. The winner will be presented at the Adequan/USDF Annual Convention with a perpetual trophy that will be permanently housed in the Roemer Foundation/USDF Hall of Fame and will receive a “keeper” trophy, a \$250 gift certificate from The Paddock Saddlery and a \$500 stipend from the USDF Youth Executive Board. To download a nomination form go to the awards section of the USDF website. For more information email the Youth Program Coordinator at youth@usdf.org

**GROUNDWORK:
To Do or Not To Do?
THAT IS THE QUESTION,
WHETHER IT IS NOBLER TO EMBRACE THE CLASSIC PRACTICES
OR BREAK WITH TRADITION AND ENGAGE IN THE NEW TECHNIQUES.....**

Forgive me for waxing poetic, but I can't help feeling a bit philosophical. After all, training horses involves a lot of judicial thought. You question yourself as to whether you are pushing your horses hard enough, or perhaps too hard. What training methodology and techniques to utilize, and when to use them is another judgment call. Until recently both my feet were firmly planted in the land of classical dressage. But after hosting and participating in a groundwork clinic with Morgan Dillard Harris, at my facility, Cobbs Mountain Farm, on June 20th, my cynicism began to wane. And I have to admit I was especially skeptical of the Natural Horsemanship type of training.

My cynical attitude of the Natural Horsemanship craze took root in the early nineties when those clinicians (you know the ones) were enjoying unbridled admiration from "center stage". After attending a few such clinics I drew the conclusion that the clinicians were more interested in padding their already inflated egos and wallets than in truly teaching sound techniques that could be employed by the average amateur. Although I learned of Morgan Dillard Harris through the recommendation of a trusted friend and accomplished horsemen, I was still quite skeptical that this new brand of Natural Horsemanship with its emphasis on groundwork techniques was credible and would be effective for the average horseperson.

The clinic was a private one, limited to 3 participants and their horses to ensure that we had plenty of one on one time with the Morgan. Many of us already know the importance of making your horse respect your personal space. Morgan brings that principle to a whole new level of awareness by helping you to read the finer points of your horse's body language and then getting the horses to learn and ***totally and unconditionally*** respect yours. It was a full day clinic and about 3/4's of that time was spent learning new techniques on the ground for making your horse move backwards, forwards and side to side. Your position and posture was crucial to the

success of each exercise; and each exercise built the foundation for the next one (sound familiar?).

We started with 3 totally different types of horses: the first was a very laid back, stiff 14 yr old Quarter horse gelding, the second was a passive, but willing 7 year old Appaloosa gelding, and finally a 6 year old Hanoverian mare with dominance issues.

At the end of the day we witnessed a positive change in every horse. The Quarter Horse was more forward and supple, the Appaloosa was lighter and more responsive, but the biggest and most obvious change was in the mare. Employing the groundwork techniques dealt firmly and effectively with her challenging attitude on the relative safety of the ground. Moreover, the effects carried over to the under saddle work where she was ready to go to work without her typical resistances such as balking, spooking, head tossing, etc.

To summarize, I would have to admit that this clinic changed not only the mare's attitude, but mine as well. I believe that this type of groundwork can be beneficial for any type of horse, but it is truly an invaluable training tool for the more problematic horse, whether it be a pushy, opinionated mare; a recalcitrant gelding or a disrespectful, dissenting stallion. In my opinion, this methodology offers some great training tools to the dressage trainer in her quest to create a more focused and willing partner.

by Marie Klimchuk

Morgan started riding and competing as a small child. She then pursued an interest in Natural Horsemanship by securing a position with Clinton Anderson as an apprentice for 3 years. She now runs her own training and lesson business, Carolina Horsemanship, out of Twin Palms Farm in Centerville, NC. You can learn more her and her training philosophy at her website www.carolinahorsemanship.com

Educational Opportunities...

Brook Doss Clinic at Carouselle Farm

Clinic dates are July 25 –26; the closing date is July 20th. Fees are: \$115 for a 45 min private lesson; \$95 for 30 min private lesson and \$25 per day to audit. Space is limited to 10 rides per day. Contact Shelby Johnson at 434-546-2168 for more information.

Video Library See our website at www.swvada.org for a complete listing of educational dressage videos and DVD's . Contact the video librarian, Katherine Gramam to arrange checkout at KCGraman@aol.com And please remember to send your Southern States feed proof of purchase labels to Laura Nelson. These labels are SWVADA's source of funding for the video library.

Dressage Clinic with Cindy Sydnor
20-21Jun09
By Tracey Smith-Oliver

I had the privilege to host a dressage clinic with Cindy Sydnor on 20-21Jun at our farm, Dixon Hill in Fairfield, VA. Cindy is an accomplished trainer and teacher with enormous experience and talent, as well as an "R" judge and an examiner for the USDF Instructor Certification program. There were nine enthusiastic participants and the horses ranged in experience from green to PSG/11. Cindy watched each rider warm up for a few minutes and quickly identified areas to work on. The following is a summary some of the highlights.

Cindy emphasized how important our position is to riding effectively. It is only through correct position and effective use of our aids that our horses can develop gymnastically into "happy athletes." We need to sit on our seat bones but grow tall through our upper body with hands together and in front of our upper body. We were told that if our hands were over the saddle, then the reins were too long (many of us were guilty of too long reins). I was reminded of clinics with Lilo Fore a few years ago who said, "a long rein is a hard rein." Our shoulders must be relaxed and down. When we raise our shoulders, this raises our center of gravity. In addition, we must be strong and somewhat braced (but not tense) in our core muscles in order to maintain this correct position and remain sitting on our seat bones. A helpful lunging exercise to improve our core muscles and stability is to put one hand on our stomach and push against it. In addition, many of us are not as strong on our left side and were reminded not to collapse our left side. Collapsing the left side puts our weight more on the right seat bone. Subsequently, horses will move more of their weight to the right to maintain their balance. As someone who collapses their left side, no wonder my horse has a tough time performing half passes to the left! Bottom line is, we as riders, need to constantly work on our position every day, and always raise the bar to where we need to be!

At the trot, a few of the riders posted tentatively while trotting (barely touching the saddle when sitting in the post). Cindy suggested that they post with more weight in the saddle. She mentioned that the post is actually gymnastic for the horse. When the rider sits in the post, he/she pushes against the horse's back. The horse in turn pushes (and raises) his back. Therefore, it is important that the rider actually sits in the post, and doesn't just "brush" the horse's back.

Cindy worked with a few of the riders on developing more pushing and carrying power in their horse's hind legs in the canter. After a general warm-up, the horses were asked for a few piaffe-like steps from the walk by closing the legs with quick, friendly taps of the whip, but using just enough hand to keep them from trotting. As soon as the hind legs "did something," the horses were lavishly praised. The piaffe teaches the horse to coordinate and energize the hindquarters. From the piaffe-like steps in both directions, the horses were brought into the canter on a 20 meter circle and asked for transitions within the canter, the riders sending them forward and then bringing them back. At first, the horses were asked for modest medium and collection, then gradually increasing the amount of medium and collection. The goal was for the horses to eventually jump in the canter for a few steps when bringing them back into a more collected canter. There were a few horses that were behind the rider's aids. Riders were reminded not to use their legs with every stride and that their seat bones are much more effective aids than their legs. Riders were instructed in doing walk/trot transitions by breathing with their legs (take the legs off, then on again), while driving down and forward with the seat bones. Even when walking on a loose rein, make sure the walk is active. The walk sets the stage for the other gaits.

All the participants really enjoyed the clinic and it was great to see the improvement in both the riders and horses with Cindy's instruction. I'm hoping to have her back in the not too distant future.

"The aim of this noble and useful art is solely to make horses supple, relaxed, flexible, compliant and obedient...without all of which a horse - whether he be meant for military service, hunting or dressage - will be neither comfortable in his movements nor pleasurable to ride."

Francois Robichon de la Guerinierre, Ecole de Cavalerie (pub.1729)

GHPEC News...

New Sound System is done and it is awesome! Announcements can now be heard throughout the park, including Ring 3! Instructions for use will be provided in future manager's packets. Tammy will also be available to train show staff at the park the week of 6/29 to 7/3. The committee is looking into purchasing a wire free headset that can be used for clinics.

Ring Maintenance The committee voted to change the vendor responsible for the weekly ring dragging which will increase costs, but should improve results due to equipment that is more suited to the job. The new vendor will start after July 1st.

Handicapped Mounting Block has been completed, but appears to be too large. Tammy will get correct dimensions and contact the Boy Scout for revisions.

CIF Funds The committee voted not to apply for matching funds from the county this year deciding instead to concentrate on park maintenance and repairs.

Ring 3 Footing Most committee members (the majority of feedback from park users) are in agreement that the footing in Ring 3 is both too shallow and too hard, and are looking into the cost and formula for additives such as sand.

Clean-up Day will be July 16th at 5:30 p.m. Volunteers will work on clearing out old and/or broken jumps and debris from around the storage building. **Volunteers are needed** — If you use the park and live nearby, please consider helping out!

New Storage Trailer The committee voted to place a \$500 bid on a used storage trailer for the jump standards that are currently stored outside.

A few important reminders to members:

Gates must be locked behind you to discourage trespassers.

Dogs must be on a leash at all times.

Guest(s) must have applied for one day pass to ride with members. Furthermore, if a non-member is found riding with out proper validation, the member he came with risks having his membership revoked. Ouch!

If you see people who you **know** are trespassing through the park (or worse yet, riding on the soccer fields) please call the non-emergency number for the Roanoke County police which 540-562-3265. The Committee discourages any confrontation between park members and trespassers, but does encourage the wholesome hobby of photography!



Horse/ Dressage Organizations....

www.swvada.org

www.virginiadressage.org

www.usdf.org

www.usef.org

www.ponyclub.org

www.blueridgeeventingassociation.org

www.virginiahorsecouncil.org

Sites for Fun and Learning

www.virginiahorse.com

www.dressageunlimited.com

www.dressagedaily.com

www.dressageresource.com

www.dressageblog.com

www.dressagecritique.com

“The end of all schooling and dressage is perfect harmony between man and mount - BEAUTY. The horse must show that he feels comfortable and the rider must not betray how hard it is to achieve this! “

Wilhelm Museler