



SPRING 2004 ISSUE

P a s s a g e



**THE NEWSLETTER OF
DRESSAGE
WINNIPEG**

Dressage Winnipeg Board of Directors 2004

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No one in place at this time

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EDUCATION/LIBRARY (2nd Yr)

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Oakville, Mb R0H 0Y0
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Wk: 864-2431 (*til 2:00 weekdays)
Email: chunkin@whpcn.net

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(Member at Large)

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Winnipeg, Mb R3L 1S7
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Fax: 943-1973
Email: trgunlim@mb.sympatico.ca

CADORA Rep.

None one in place at this time



DRESSAGE WINNIPEG 2004 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name:	Home Ph:
Address:	Work Ph:
Postal Code:	Fax:
Stable name & phone:	Date Of Birth: (For Juniors):
Horse Council Membership #:	E-mail:

Dressage Winnipeg Membership (See reverse for details)

Make cheque payable to Dressage Winnipeg for both Dressage Winnipeg and CADORA fees

	<u>Before Feb 1st 2004</u>	<u>After Feb 1st</u>
ASSOCIATE (Non-Voting, Non-Competitive)	\$20.00	20.00
<u>REGULAR:</u>		
SENIOR.....	\$25.00	35.00
JUNIOR (Not Reached Their 18 th Birthday By Jan 1,2004)....	\$15.00	25.00
FAMILY.....	\$40.00	50.00

Volunteer Commitment For Regular Members

Pay Out Now..... **\$50.00**

OR

Commit To Volunteer **And** Include Separate \$50.00

Cheque Post-Dated For November 1, 2002

CADORA Inc. (optional)

() JUNIOR	\$20.00
() SENIOR	\$30.00
() ADDITIONAL OMNIBUS	\$20.00
() LATE FEE after March 1st, 2004	\$10.00

Volunteer Commitment Opportunities (Indicate your preferences below)

<u>SHOWS</u>		<u>OTHER</u>	
• Gate Attendant	()	• Work at a Bingo (* must be 18 yrs. of age)	()
• Scribe (pls note if have experience)	()	• Assist on a Committee	()
• Runner	()	- Newsletter	()
• Tabulator	()	- Show	()
• Show Secretary	()	- Fund-raising	()
• Show Secretary Assistant	()	- Volunteers	()
• Billet Judges or Transport Judges	()	• Something else in support of DW?	()
• Announcer (pls note if have experience)	()		

Would you like to receive your newsletter in hard copy ___ or electronic ___ format?

If a Photographer takes photos at DW events, will you allow your photos to be used in the DW newsletter and/or Website? Yes/No Signature: _____

✉ **Mail to:** Marlene Hanson, Box 14 R. R. 2, Dugald, Manitoba R0E 0K0

DRESSAGE WINNIPEG MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

There are two main categories of membership in Dressage Winnipeg; Regular members and Associate members. Regular members may be either Junior, Senior or Family members. All Associate and Regular members enjoy the following privileges:

- Entitlement to borrow books or videos from the Dressage Winnipeg lending library
- Reduced member rates at Dressage Winnipeg clinics or information sessions
- Receive newsletters and other bulletins

Regular members in addition, are eligible to compete at Dressage Winnipeg shows, stand for election to the Board of Directors, and vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Volunteer Commitment

For Dressage Winnipeg to offer well-run and affordable shows, events and benefits to members at affordable cost, the active involvement of volunteers is vital. To ensure that volunteers can be counted on when needed, the volunteer portion of the Regular membership in Dressage Winnipeg has proven to be an essential component. Here's how it works. When you join Dressage Winnipeg as a Regular Junior, Senior or Family member, you commit to DW for at least six hours of volunteer time during the course of the year. Most people choose to volunteer at either a show or a bingo, but other volunteer options are possible too. The six volunteer hours can be worked all at once or in variable flexible combinations. The Volunteer Committee will attempt to schedule you in to the preferred area you indicated on your application, but please keep in mind that it is the member's responsibility to contact the Volunteer Coordinator to coordinate your commitment. The sooner you do that the better your choices will be. Members are expected to volunteer their own time, but a friend or relative could also fulfill your commitment. Your commitment to volunteer is secured with a separate post-dated cheque that accompanies your membership form. Your cheque is post-dated for November 1st, 2004. If you fulfill your volunteer commitment your cheque is destroyed or returned to you. If for some reason you do not fulfill at least 6 hours of volunteer time during the year, your cheque will be cashed. If 6 hours of volunteering is not something you can work into your schedule then you can take the option of immediately paying out your \$50.00 with your membership form. Please note that a \$50.00 Volunteer Commitment is required for each Regular member (Junior or Senior) in a Family membership.

CADORA Inc.

CADORA Inc., (Canadian Dressage Owners and Riders Association) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development of Dressage in Canada. Membership in CADORA is optional. You do not have to be a CADORA member to compete in Dressage Winnipeg shows. By joining CADORA, you benefit by receiving an Omnibus, a quarterly newsletter (CADORA INK), and members are eligible for CADORA awards. More information on CADORA is available on their website at www.cadora.ca.

Messages from Dressage Winnipeg:

This year's schedule for Dressage Winnipeg Shows is:

Spring Flowers Show—May 8th and 9th, 2004

Capt. de Kenyeres Trophy Competition —June 12th and 13th, 2004

Autumn Classic—Sept 25th and 26th, 2004

Watch for your prize list for full information and entry forms. If you have not received them by mail you may download them from the www.dressagewinnipeg.com website or call the Show Secretary, Irene Thomson at 204-755-2828 to request them.

Wanted - Show Secretary for 2005. If interested perhaps you would like to join the show committee for all or part of the 2004 season to ease your way in gradually. If interested please contact Irene Thomson 755 2828 for full details. Show Secretary must commit to running 2/3 shows/year. (Note: this is not solely a volunteer position)

New for 2004! Riding in an actual competition dressage ring prior to the competition will be available this year for those interested! One ring will be set up Friday afternoon & evening and short schooling time slots will be designated. Those wishing to school their horses in the ring may pay the fee and slot into a scheduled time at the show office on a first-come, first-served basis. This is of particular interest to those with young or green horses or those who have been spooky with the flowers and judge's booths etc., thus resulting in difficulties during the competition.

EC/DC Sanctioned Dressage Stewards Clinic 2004:

On February 21-22, Dressage Winnipeg hosted a Dressage Stewards Clinic in Winnipeg.

The FEI Stewards Elisabeth H. Williams from USA and Christine Hickman from Canada led the clinic which welcomed anyone interested in becoming a dressage steward as well as offering upgrading for Equine Canada Stewards interested in becoming licensed Dressage Stewards.

Dressage Winnipeg and Dressage Canada both promoted this special clinic through their respective websites. As a result, four Dressage Winnipeg members attended; Irene Thomson, Christina Dolinski, Catherine Kellar and Ashley Fudge. They were joined by the experienced Manitoba Stewards Jan Stephens, Norman Kailinski, Eva-Lynne Sokoliwski and Margaret Teske as well as Brett Filson from Saskatchewan.

This clinic would not have been possible without the support of Dressage Canada as well as Manitoba Horse Council staff. Dressage Winnipeg members Marlene Hanson and Jane Fudge assisted with lunch.

Those who attended commented afterwards how informative the session had been as well as how thorough and helpful Elisabeth and Christine were. Here is hoping more Dressage Winnipeg members will take an interest in future Stewards clinics.

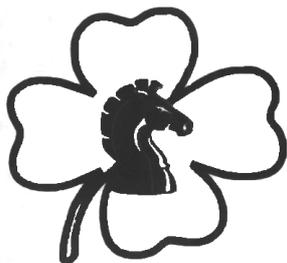
(Clinic report submitted by Jane Fudge)

Newsletter Team:

Editor: Myriam Dyck

Mailings: Jane Fudge

Advertising Layout and Design: Kittie Wong



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- Short)
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- Sheets
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- more.....
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Winnipeg, Manitoba



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Sport Horse Show

Presented by Manitoba Trakehner

(Open to all sport horse types NOT exclusive to Trakehners.)

Saturday August 21, 2004
Birds Hill Park , Manitoba



Horse in hand classes (Pony, Weanling, Yearling, 2 Year, 3 Year & 4 Years+)
English riding class (English Pleasure - young horses welcome)

Clinic: How to present a horse in hand (the evening before - August 20th)
Clinic: Riding Clinic hosted by Dirk Fogg

About Dirk Fogg – Judge & Clinician

Dirk Fogg, is an instructor for the Equine Studies Department at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I. His philosophy is based on the principles of the German riding traditions, mixed with the North American approach. He stresses the fundamentals of dressage as the base of all equine disciplines. Dirk's experience encompasses breeding, training, competing and sales of warmbloods; as well as the teaching of all level of students. He has participated in the 100 Day Stallion Testing under Gerd Zuther in Charlottesville, VA.; been a member of the Auction Team for the Verband Hannoverscher Warmblutzüchter in Verden, Germany and a trainer at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Canada.

Early Registration: \$15.00/class Registration after July 30th: \$25.00/class
Stabling: \$26.75 (GST included) No Stabling: \$ 5.35 (GST included)
Clinic – Present Horse in Hand: \$5.00/person
Clinic – Riding: \$40 for horse and rider

Join the fun and call today to register your horse:

Annette: 738.4440 kirovets@hotmail.com or Teresa: 866.2948 t@imaginegd.com

Dressage Winnipeg now offers advertising for horse-related or other businesses as follows:
(rates effective Jan 1st 2004)

Website: (www.dressagewinnipeg.com)

Home Page Banner Ad: \$25/mo
Secondary page Banner Ad: \$20/mo
Horse For Sale Photo Ad: \$12 for members
(until horse sells) \$15 for non-members
Classifieds: Free for items/horses under \$500
\$3/mo for items/horses over \$500

Newsletter:

(Due to improvements in the quality of the newsletter in the past years, there has been an increase in our advertising rates. Note that Sponsors receive complimentary advertising should they wish to place an ad in the newsletter - size dependent on amount of the sponsorship contribution)

Full Page Ad: \$40/issue or \$100/yr
Half Page Ad: \$30/issue or \$80/yr
Quarter Page Ad: \$20/issue or \$60/yr
Classifieds: Free for items/horses under \$500
\$5/issue for items/horses over \$500

Other forms of advertising such as Stallion ads, coaching available, etc can be arranged. Please contact Myriam Dyck at 204-795-5519 or email myriam@mts.net to book advertising. Assistance in designing your ad(s) is also available separately.

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- *maximized physical and mental performance*
- *better attention span and more focused concentration*



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email: sharon@primepets.net

The de Kenyeres Junior Rider Development Fund 2004

Dressage Winnipeg is pleased to announce that their scholarship competition will be offered again to junior riders in 2004. Riders aged 12-18 (January 1 2004- December 31 2004), who have not won any two prior de Kenyeres scholarships, are eligible to compete for one of three scholarships, which will provide funding of \$500 for lessons or clinics with a certified coach of the rider's choice.

Riders may enter this scholarship competition by:

- 1. Filling out an entry form.*
- 2. Competing in a de Kenyeres equitation class at a schooling show, at a DW dressage show, or at the PC Benefit show. An office fee of \$20.00 will be charged for participation in the scholarship process of one essay evaluation and one equitation class evaluation. (Riders may enter further equitation classes at a cost of \$10.00 per ride, if they wish to try and possibly improve their score for the selection process for the September final class. Their highest score in any equitation class will be used in the selection process.)*
- 3. Writing an essay explaining their involvement with horses, their goals for working with a dressage coach, and their future aspirations involving horses. (Please submit this essay:*

(a) On white paper (b) in no more than one type-written page or one and one half pages of hand-written words.)

Stables may apply for schooling shows through Dressage Winnipeg 30 days prior to the date of said show, if they need assistance, or they may organize schooling shows themselves. If they apply for an equitation class to be evaluated by a panel member of the de Kenyeres Fund evaluation team, they must also give at least 30 days notice to the education coordinator of Dressage Winnipeg. Schooling shows must be held on or before Aug. 22, 2004.

Scores will be awarded to riders in de Kenyeres equitation classes (20 % of final score) and for the essays submitted by the participant (20% of the final score). The top 10 highest scoring riders (based upon the essay scores and the preliminary equitation class scores) will compete in the final equitation class (60% of final score) for the scholarship at the September DW dressage show at Bird's Hill Park. Essays must be submitted to the education coordinator for Dressage Winnipeg prior to August 22, 2004.

Dressage Winnipeg Education Coordinator:

Merelyn Hunkin

Box 206, Oakville Manitoba

Phone: 1-204-267-2889.

Email: chunkin@whpcn.net

de Kenyeres Junior Rider Development Fund
Entry and Waiver Form

Rider Information: (To be accompanied by a fee of \$20.00)

Name: _____
Address _____

Birth date: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____ MHC#: _____

Parent's Name(s): _____

Address:(If different from rider's _____

Signature of Parent(s): _____

Dated this _____ day of the month of _____ in the year _____.

I, _____, by signing the above, allow my child to enter the de Kenyeres Scholarship competition, and acknowledge that equestrian sports are a high risk sport and involve inherent risk, and that although my child _____, will be wearing an ASTM (American Society for Standards Testing Materials) approved helmet, displaying the SEI(Safety Equipment Institute) seal, whenever mounted at any show holding a de Kenyeres equitation class, acknowledge that no protective headgear or equipment can protect against all foreseeable injury. I further acknowledge the risks in riding and working around horses, and that these risks can include bodily injury to both horse and rider resulting from normal use, riding and competition. In consideration, of being allowed to participate in the de Kenyeres program, I hereby assume all risks, and release and absolve the organizing committee of Dressage Winnipeg, their officials, volunteers, officers and directors, of all responsibilities, liabilities or claims of any nature and kind which may arise from my child's participation in this program(including but not limited to bodily injury or death to my child, and his or her mount, and damage to property from any cause whatsoever, including the neglect of one or more of the individuals or organizations mentioned.)

Horse Information:

Name: _____ Age & Gender: _____

Owner's Name: _____

Owner's Address: _____

MHC#: _____

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

By signing the above, I _____ the owner of _____, acknowledge that my horse may be used by this rider during any and all de Kenyeres equitation classes in the year _____, and that this horse may be ridden by another competitor under supervision of the de Kenyeres evaluators, during an equitation class.

Equitation Class(es) Entered:(Entry to first class covered by initial fee listed above; all further class entries must be accompanied by a fee of \$10.00/class.)

Date: _____ Fee Paid: _____

Location of Class: _____

MANITOBA'S HORSE WEEK 2004

MB Horse Council is coordinating this event. It is actually a national celebration, which takes place May 31 to June 6, 2004. You don't have to be a member of any organization to participate. Goals for the week:

1. To provide a fun & enjoyable experience for individuals in the equine community.
2. To build a stronger relationship with individuals and groups in the equine community & industry.
3. To increase participation in equine activities by building awareness.
4. To provide a promotional opportunity for the equine industry.
5. To increase the understanding of the provincial Horse Councils and Equine Canada.

Here is how you can get involved. Ride & Drive Day-Sunday, June 6-organize a ride, drive, or sporting event with 2- 200 of your friends in your community. The event can be whatever you want as long as horses are included. It can be an already scheduled event, just ensure you celebrate Horse Week. Be sure to register your event on the Equine Canada website www.equinecanada.ca and in turn you will receive a Ride & Drive Day souvenir button for each participant. You will also receive an electronic certificate to print and distribute to your participants. The provinces are challenging each other with the following: 1. The largest group of riders on Ride & Drive Day. 2. The largest number of registered entries for Ride & Drive Day. There is also a national Kid's Contest. Kids can participate by visiting the Equine Canada website, listed above, for details. Visit the Manitoba Horse Council website at www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca, further details will be available on the Horse Week by mid March. The plan is to profile all registered events on the Equine Canada website profiled by province.

Riverbend Farms is...

- a dressage and boarding stable.

Riverbend Farms offers...

- riding lessons from Basic- to Medium-level dressage.

Riverbend Farms is a participant in...

- the Lee Tubman clinics.
- the Travelling School shows

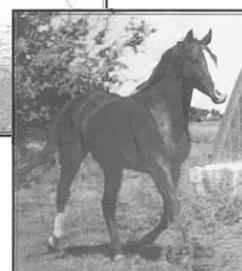
Riverbend Farms



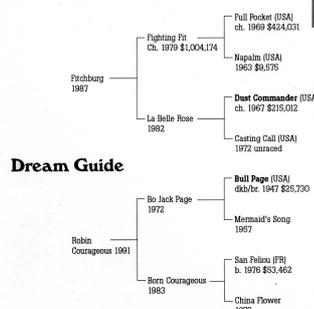
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RR #1 - Richard, Saskatchewan S0M 2P0

Horsey Humor

This issue, we bring you some humour from a farrier's perspective!

To most people the farrier is just the guy (or gal) who appears every few weeks in a battered pick-up, wrestles a few horses while nailing shoes on their hooves, and then disappears. But if you ever manage to get one of 'em talking, you'll hear some of the wildest, strangest, funniest stories on earth. It's a unique profession, and it creates some unique circumstances.



A friend of mine was one of four guys apprenticing with an older farrier, and one of them had inadvertently cut a little too deep with the hoof knife, so there was some blood present. A woman who was boarding her horse at the stable walked by with her horse and said, "Do you know that horse is bleeding?" to which the subject of this story replied, "Yes, ma'am. We just took a core sample from this horse's foot." The woman gave him a quizzical look and he further expounded on this statement by telling her that farriers do this on request so that the general health and nutritional needs of the horse can be ascertained.

The woman seemed satisfied with the answer and led her horse off to the wash rack. The farrier in charge then said to the apprentice, "Why did you tell her that? Now she's going to come back here and want the same thing done to HER horse!" The apprentice replied that he didn't think anyone could be as gullible as to believe that story, and not to worry about her coming back. Well, about fifteen minutes later the woman returned with her horse, asking that they take a "core sample" from her horse's foot. Needless to say, this left some red faces all around! (Submitted by Andy Wells.)

I was at a sale barn one night, when a guy and his wife started talking to me about how he was going to buy his kids a horse. I told him all about the stuff he was going to need. As he started to bid I handed him my card, told him I was a horseshoer, and that I would be happy to shoe the horse on which he was bidding. He called to the man leading the horse and asked to see his feet. He looked and handed my card back. "I won't be needing your services," he said. "This horse already has shoes." (Submitted by Steve Vaughan)

I had just finished a day of shoeing in the foothills above my home and was driving down the winding highway back toward my house when I saw a red light flashing in my rear view mirror. One look told me what the problem was. While I thought I had banked my fire before departing, my old homemade coal forge had caught a draft as I was driving and was billowing smoke right out of the chimney as I cruised merrily down the road. The highway patrolman came up to me and asked the usual questions about driver's license, etc., and then began asking me about the forge and how it worked. As I was working trying to put out what fire remained in my firebox I was explaining how I had made it from an old water-heater core and I showed him the firebox and told him that was where I placed the coal. Then I showed him how I put horseshoes in there to heat... That's when he stopped me and started laughing. "A horseshoer," he said, "I thought this was a coal powered truck!" He was laughing so hard he just let me go and never wrote the ticket. (Submitted by Bob Broussard) *Continued on page 13 ...*

NEW! List *your* equine-related business in the
www.ManitobaEquineDirectory.com

Basic listings are free, upgraded listings available. Help make this *the* directory for ALL Manitoba equestrians!

Horsey Humor

Continued from Page 12....

The farrier who shod all the horses at the riding school where I learned to ride was a wise and skilful man. He had learnt his trade in the army pre WW1. What he hadn't seen and treated wasn't in the books.

A new pony arrived for the summer. It badly needed shoeing and Mr. Toms on taking the merest glance immediately said, "This pony gets laminitis." He pulled the shoes and whilst he was trimming the feet the owner, a rather large and 'well to do' lady arrived. She stood and watched for a moment or two and then said, "My good man, this pony suffers from lemon slices."

Mr. Toms put the foot down, took his cap off, leant against the pony and scratched his bald head - a sure sign that he was about to have some fun. "Lemon slices, Madam?"

"Yes, my vet said he had lemon slices and had to be specially shod. Do you know what to do?"

"Oh, that sort of lemon slices. Yes, I know the best thing for lemon slices."

"You do? What is that?"

"A bottle of gin and lots of tonic, Madam - that's the best thing to go with lemon slices."

"Why didn't my vet tell me that?"

"Perhaps he doesn't agree with me."

The woman turned and flounced out the stables. She returned a short while later and presented old Mr. Toms with a large bottle of gin and several bottles of tonic. The only thing that was missing was the lemon slices!

(Submitted by Linda Andrews)

(courtesy of www.horseshoes.com, permission granted to reproduce in Passage Newsletter)

***Dressage Winnipeg
would like to thank***

***Elder's
Veterinary
Clinic***

***for their Sponsorship
Donation in 2003!***

Thank You!

To All Dressage Winnipeg Volunteers:

**Now that we know the dates
for the shows this year, please
mark them on your calendar
and plan your volunteering
schedule for 2004.**

**You may contact Jane Fudge
to coordinate which show(s)
are the best for you to attend
and make it easier for her to
plan out the volunteer
schedule for three shows.**

**(204-275-8794 or email
j_fudge@shaw.ca).**

**Thank you—we couldn't do it
without you!**

CONTACT AND CONNECTION



by Thomas Ritter

During one of my visits at Egon von Neindorff's Reitinstitut, I stayed for a little while to watch after my daily lessons. A gentleman was riding Siglavy Tessino, a Lipizzaner gelding who had been trained up to the pesade, and who later on became one of my favorite horses at the institute. The horse had just recovered from a three or four day-lay-up due to a minor foot injury. He was very fresh, as he was clearly happy to be out and about again. His rider was equally clearly not entirely comfortable sitting on this powder keg with a burning fuse, which showed in his posture, and the natural desire to hold on to the reins for security. Egon von Neindorff saw it as soon as he entered the arena, and the first thing he said was: "Weg mit der Hand! Ganz weg mit der Hand! Aber ja nicht die Zuegel durchhaengen lassen!!" This could be translated approximately as: "Give with your hands! Completely give with your hands! But don't you dare drop the contact!!"

This little anecdote captures perfectly the dilemma that all of us have faced at one time or another. The teacher criticizes our heavy hand, so we give - only to be criticized for throwing the reins away. I remember riding a school master horse on whom I would either give too little or too much for quite some time, before I figured out just how much I had to release and when.

This is, of course, part of a larger issue: the rider's tact in the application of the aids. When we start out, the intensity of our aids seems to be a matter of all or nothing, because we cannot differentiate very well yet. For example, during one lesson on the black Oldenburg gelding Salvador at von Neindorff's institute, I was reaching a point where the horse began to find balance and relaxation with me in the saddle, and von Neindorff asked me to make the horse a little more expressive. So I gave an aid with the inside leg - it was on the right rein, in the trot, coming onto the short side by the office. As soon as the 17+hh large gelding felt my leg, he bounded past von Neindorff and the entire short side in no more than two leaps, and it took me halfway down the next long side, before I had him under control again. Imagine the master's frustration at this lack of tact! He was as surprised that anybody could be that insensitive, as I was surprised that this horse could explode like that after an aid that did not seem that big to me.

Von Neindorff used to address this issue in lessons from time to time with the reminder: "Find out to what degree you can, may, or must apply your aids."

In other words, it's a matter of finding the right nuance in every situation. There is an enormously large middle ground between holding the rein unyieldingly and dropping the contact, between holding the reins too short and too long. Just as there is an enormously large middle ground between letting the leg dangle and kicking the horse.

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The rider spends his entire life in the saddle exploring this middle ground, discovering more and more nuances, subtleties, and variations. Initially, this can be extremely frustrating, because whatever we do seems to be either too much or too little, too large or too small, not to mention too soon or too late, but we never seem to get it right. It quickly becomes a source of great mutual irritation between teacher and student, because it always takes a long time, before the student begins to get a grasp of the right feel, and the student gets angry, because the teacher is never satisfied with his attempts. And the horses, ... they are such saints.

It seems like a conundrum that is impossible to solve - until you change the way you think about the rein contact, or whatever aid is causing you trouble. From time to time every good scientist questions everything he knows about the topic he is researching, in order to come to a better understanding of the empirical data. No stone is left unturned. No "truth" is left unquestioned. The purpose is to become clear in your own mind what you really know for certain. In the process, you discover that there are certain things that you always took for granted that may not be supported by the empirical data. Wherever there is a conflict between the working hypothesis and the data, the working hypothesis has to be re-examined, and if necessary, revised. I have gone through this process countless times in my riding, and gained a deeper understanding every time. It is a way of separating the chaff from the grain, keeping what is worth keeping and discarding what is turning out to be false in the light of new evidence, i.e. new experiences in the saddle, and is consequently holding us back.

Returning to the issue of the rein contact, the path towards a solution has two aspects to it. On the one hand, the rider has to try and look with a microscope at what lies between "too much" and "too little". Initially, it will seem like a mathematical point - infinitely small. Over time, and with increasing magnification, the point expands to a broader and broader gulf, and you begin to see a vast array of nuances to choose from between the extremes. On the other hand, the rider has to enlarge the issue of the rein contact to include the entire seat, particularly the pelvic and lumbar region. The reason is that the rider's midsection is the control center, the conductor in the orchestra of the aids, that coordinates all the rider's aids and determines to what extent the aids "come through", i.e. to what degree they are successful.

In the process, the rider will discover that the leg and seat aids have the power to liberate the hands. If the seat is weak, i.e. if the midsection is weak and unstable, the hand will automatically be heavy. I have to explain here that a heavy hand is by no means limited to a hand that pulls back or that holds a heavy weight. A hand that holds too long without releasing is heavy as well, even if the contact itself amounts only to a single ounce. A dead rein contact, as opposed to a live, communicative rein contact is heavy - even if it amounts only to a single ounce. If the rider's seat is weak, the horse can furthermore bind the hand by leaning on it, which never fails to further unbalance the weak rider.

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The rein aids of a heavy hand are limited to the horse's mouth, because the seat does not transmit any energy impulses from back to front or from front to back. This is e.g. also the case when someone "rows" with their hands at the walk or canter. All the riders I have seen who ride with a rowing hand are disconnected in their own waist, and their horses go without back. These riders are weak in their midsection and consequently heavy with their hands. There can be no connection through the horse's back, if there is no connection through the rider's waist first. The rider has to lead by example in this respect as well.



If the rider's seat is balanced and secure with a strong midsection, the "power is plugged in". The rider feels that his seat bones are connected not only towards the back, with the haunches, but they are also connected towards the front, with the bit. By the same token, the hands are connected not only towards the front, with the bit, but they are also connected towards the back, with the hind legs. This makes it a little more explicable how the rider is able to affect the rein contact with his seatbones (and legs) and the hind legs with his reins. The rein contact becomes lighter when the calf loosens the hind leg up off the ground, thus withdrawing the support base for any leaning onto the bit. The hind legs will bend more in their upper joints, when the fingers close briefly around the rein for a half halt.

The midsection is the control center, I said. The pelvis is the bony structure that initiates and coordinates all aids. The muscles surrounding the pelvis are what initiate and control the movements of the pelvis. Incidentally, the strongest muscles in the human body are the very torso muscles that tie in with the pelvis. The rider's hands and legs are appendages in an equestrian sense of the pelvis, of the seatbones, to be more exact. Over the years I have observed an inverse proportionate relationship between the strength and effectiveness of the central muscles (midsection) and the peripheral muscles (forearms/hands, and legs). The higher the muscle tone in the midsection, the lighter the rein and leg contact can be. The weaker the midsection, the more the hands and legs automatically try and compensate with muscle strength. Put differently: a rider with a weak midsection tends to grip with his hands and legs. Conversely, a rider who communicates effectively with light hands and legs must have a firmly toned abdominal and lumbar musculature.

A rider with a weak midsection is almost always a rider with heavy hands, stiff hips, a hollow back and a forward tilt of the shoulders. This rider always sits on the horse's shoulders, because the hind legs literally push him out of the way. His horses show a clear lack of top line musculature.

A rider with a strong midsection will not be pushed out of the way, no matter how hard the horse may pop up his croup and thrust against the rider's seat. As a result, the horse's haunches will give in sooner or later. The back finds the necessary support in the hind legs and starts lifting and swinging. The horse begins to develop a strong top line from tail to ears.

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Everybody can experiment with this. If you go limp in your midsection, you will find that your horse starts leaning on your hand, because he is rapidly losing self carriage. If you tighten your midsection, you will feel that the horse is regaining balance/self carriage, which translates into a lighter rein contact. When you feel that your horse is going in self carriage, give both reins an inch. If you keep everything else unchanged, you may find that the horse either stretches forward-downward, or that he falls apart. If you tighten your abdominal muscles as you lengthen the reins, you will find that the horse remains in self carriage, maybe with a more stretched top line than before, but he will remain uphill and in self carriage.

The firmer the rider's midsection is, the longer the reins can be without losing the connection. Whether the reins are longer or shorter, a firm midsection and supple hips allow the forearms, wrists, hands, and fingers to be soft and elastic.



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Dressage Canada News

Dressage Canada's Officials committee announces some innovative changes to the procedure for obtaining a dressage judging credential with Canada.

In an effort to make both updating and promotion more accessible across the country, there will be two clinics offered for updating 'r', Basic and Medium judges again this year. However, for the first time, these clinics will also serve as the evaluative component for individuals applying for carding or for promotion from 'r' to Basic status. The clinics are:

June 11-13 Clinician: Joan Macartney, FEI 'T' - Claresholm AB

July 30- Aug 1 Clinician: Elizabeth McMullen, FEI 'O' - York Equestrian Centre, Cedar Valley, ON

Those judges who will be upgrading to Medium or Senior status, or Seniors updating, will join the Education Tour to Burbank, California September 30-October 3, led by Elizabeth McMullen, FEI 'O' dressage judge. Evaluation of applicants will be done during the tour. This approach will provide many more horses/rides at FEI levels than clinics held in Canada are able to present, and is a wonderful educational opportunity for Medium and Senior judges.

Watch www.dressagecanada.org for application forms and schedules for these clinics.

Elizabeth McMullen, of Palgrave Ontario, is an FEI "O" dressage judge, USA Equestrian "S" and a Equine Canada "S" judge. Some of the events in which McMullen has officiated include the 2002 World Equestrian Games, CDIO Aachen, multiple World Cup Finals and the North American Young Rider Championships. In 2003, McMullen was a member of the Appeal Committee for the Pan American Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. In addition to other engagements, in 2004 McMullen will be on the Appeal Committee for Dressage at the Athens Olympics.

Joan Macartney, of Manotick Ontario, is an FEI "T" dressage judge. Macartney can be seen officiating at a number of competitions across Canada and the USA. This has included being a member of the judging panel for the 2003 Canadian League World Cup Finals. In 2004, Macartney's judging engagements include the 2004 North American Young Riders Championship as well as a number of CDI competitions throughout the year.

Dressage Canada, as a committee of Equine Canada, is the National governing body for Dressage in Canada. Dressage Canada's objective is to foster the growth of Dressage and the pursuit of excellence in the sport at the local, national and international levels. Dressage Canada provides support and guidance to both amateur and professional through the following programs: coaching education and programs, officials education and programs, rules & qualifying criteria, sport development, publications & awards. For more information about Dressage Canada email info@dressagecanada.org, or visit us online at www.dressagecanada.org

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