

P a s s a g e

The
Newsletter
of



Spring 2005 Issue

Dressage Winnipeg Board of Directors 2005

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CADORA Rep.

None one in place at this time

MANITOBA HORSE COUNCIL

925-5718 – Switchboard
925-5719 Flo Watson

Upcoming Events:

Spring Flowers Show
May 7th & 8th, 2005

Capt. De Kenyeres Trophy Competition
June 11th & 12th, 2005

**Manitoba Provincial
Championships**
September 17th & 18th, 2005



Prize list and entry forms available for download from the Dressage Winnipeg web site and have been mailed out.

Show secretary 2005:

Sandra Warawa 864-2712 Email: swarawa@mts.net

Westman CADORA 2005 Show Schedule

May 28-29 Judge Nancy Olson from B.C.

June 26 Judge Joan Johnson from Ottawa

August 28 Judge E. Banfield-Page from Mb.

All shows @ WKM Stables Brandon area

Contact: Chair, Flo Wotton @728-2184 in Brandon

Dressage at PineRidge:

A schooling show will be held at PineRidge Equine Park on July 22-24th, 2005.
More info coming soon... contact person is Sue Downs, email: suesteve@mts.net

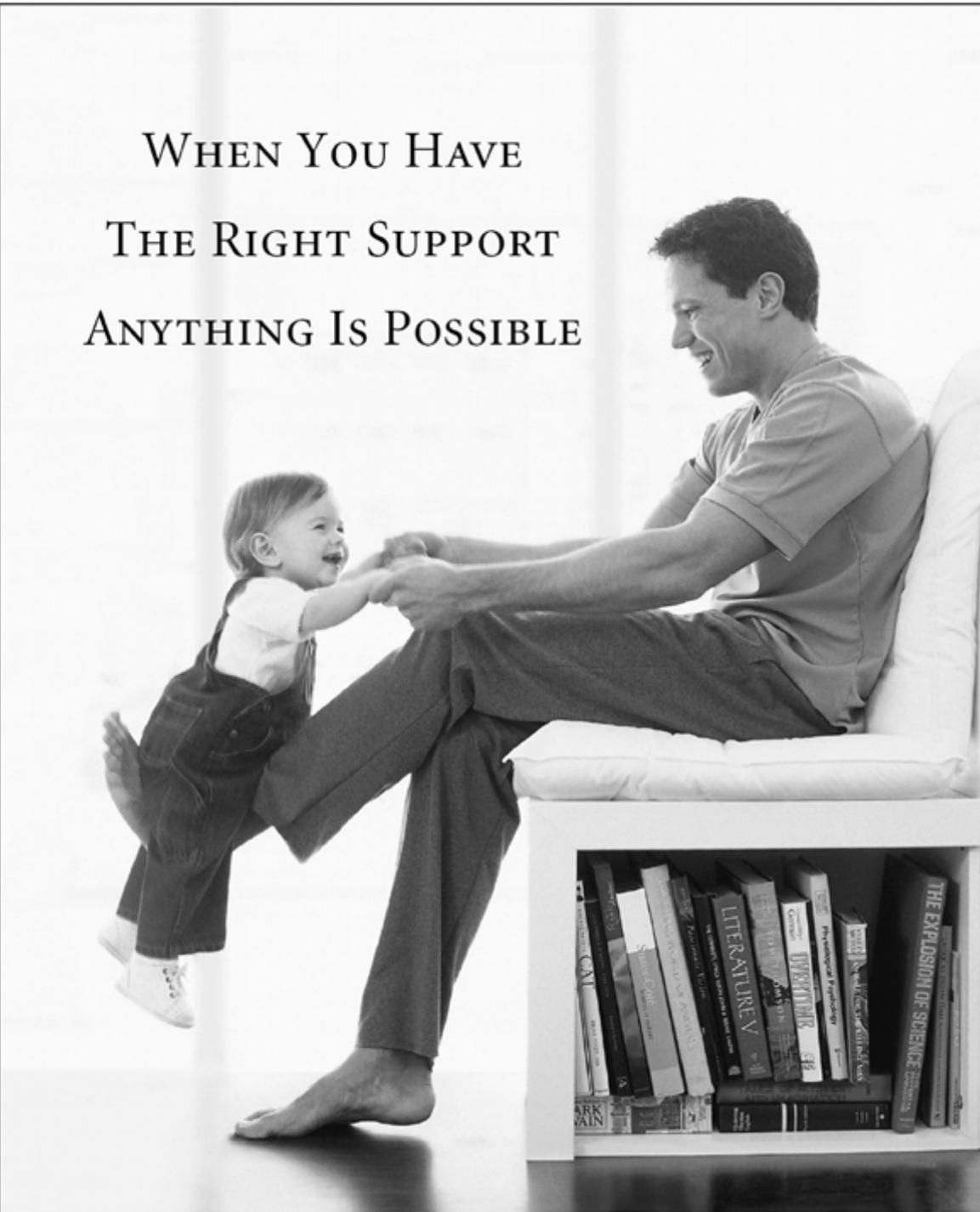
Dressage Clinic:

Sunday, May 15 at Pine Ridge Equestrian Centre, clinician is Elaine Banfield.
Theme for the clinic is "test riding". The morning will be a group session and the afternoon will be one on one. Clinic fee \$100., which includes over night stabling and lunch. You must pre-register by calling Elaine 224-1227 or Gerry 981-5242.

Freestyle Clinic with Karen Robinson from www.applaudedressage.com

The clinic is scheduled for May 14 and 15. The location will be StoneHill Farm 13 miles south of Brandon. Contact Lori Versavel if you are interested in attending this clinic 204-727-2922 or email pversave@mts.net . (See page 27 for more info)

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 _____ Fax: _____
 Postal Code: _____ Date of Birth (for Juniors): _____
 Stable name & phone: _____ Email: _____

****Please provide us with your email address if you have one. Communication through email helps to keep Dressage Winnipeg postage costs down.**

Dressage Winnipeg Membership

	Before Feb 1, 2005	After Feb 1, 2005
FAMILY	\$40.00	\$50.00
ASSOCIATE (Non-Voting, Non-Competitive)	\$20.00	\$20.00
SENIOR	\$25.00	\$35.00
JUNIOR (Not reached their 18 th birthday by Jan 1, 2005)	\$15.00	\$25.00

Volunteer Commitment for Regular (Junior or Senior) Members

Pay out now..... | \$60.00 \$60.00

OR

Commit to Volunteer AND include a separate deposit to secure your commitment. **PLEASE PostDate the volunteer commitment cheque to November 1, 2005.**

CADORA Inc. Membership (Optional)

JUNIOR	\$20.00	
SENIOR	\$30.00	
Additional Omnibus	\$20.00	
Late Fee after April 1 st , 2005	\$10.00	

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

Mail this application form and cheques to:

Lynn Riddell
 18 Leeward Place
 Winnipeg MB R3X 1K9
 253-2317 (H) 927-2782 (W)

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 1, 2005.** If you fulfill your volunteer commitment your cheque is destroyed. 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 \$60.00 with your membership form. Please note that a \$60.00 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.

Opportunities for Volunteering 2005

Name: _____

CHOICES:

1) I want my volunteer cheque to be gifted to Dressage Winnipeg in lieu of volunteer hours. _____
 (If you are gifting your volunteer cheque, it is not necessary to write a separate cheque. Simply write one cheque for your membership fees and the volunteer gift)

2) I would like to do my 6 hours of volunteering (does not have to be in one 6 hour block, but can be spread out over a number of events).

(Enclose your volunteer commitment cheque of \$60 dated for November 1st, 2005. If your 6 hours are fulfilled by that date, the cheque will not be cashed and will be destroyed. Should your hours not be fulfilled, the cheque will be cashed.)

Please check off the times and duties which you would like and we will try to assign duties accordingly. We cannot guarantee that you will get that specific position as each show must be staffed out of the volunteer base. Please be as precise as possible and indicate which job(s) you are willing to assume at which times as this will help the Volunteer Coordinator greatly in planning out the year in advance! Several may be selected. **Thank you.**

Please circle your preference of Days and Times

Volunteer Duties		May Show	June Show	Sept Show			
					Day preference	Time Preference	Day preference
Ring Monitor Friday Warmup		Fri aft only		Fri aft only		Fri aft only	
Scribe (Specify experience Y/N, level?)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Assistant to Show Secretary		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Assistant to Volunteer Chair		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Announcer (State if previous experience)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Assistant to the Steward		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Awards Committee (awards distribution at show)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Tabulator		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Runner		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Flower Committee (Handles flowers at shows)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Gate Keepers (may be combined with Whipper-in)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Whipper-in (Directs riders from warmup ring to show ring on time)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?
Driver of judges (Non-competitor)		Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?	Sat or Sun?	AM or PM?

Form continued....

3. Other activities throughout the year or part of the year – this can include contributing professional skills.

Other Activities	
Bingo volunteer (evenings only)	
Newsletter Team	
Sponsorship	
Education/Clinics	
De Kenyeres Program	
Photography at shows	
Media Liaison	
Other	

Comments: _____

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Conrad Schumacher and Dr. Hillary Clayton on The Conformation of the Dressage Horse

Written by Bill Woods,
Published in the summer 2000 issue of USDF Connections



One session at the 1999 National Symposium was devoted to the qualities Mr. Schumacher and Dr. Clayton look for in a horse that can go to the highest levels of dressage.

According to Mr. Schumacher, first he looks for the "middle" of the horse to be at the point where the rear portion of the raised spines of the thoracic vertebrae (which form the withers) blend into the flat of the horse's back. This allows the rider to sit over the horse's center of gravity. When horses are constructed with the withers very forward, with a long back and a high croup, it is impossible to sit with enough of the horse "in front of the rider" and very hard to produce collection.

Mr. Schumacher also wants a horse that is "rectangular" in appearance. From his chest to his hindquarters, he should be longer than his height from the withers to the ground. His length should come, not from the back itself being long, but from a big shoulder and from big quarters. The legs should be relatively short with the joints near the ground. This gives the horse a better natural balance. "Long legged horses look very elegant," he observed, "but try to ride a six meter volte with them!"

Ideally, the horse's neck should be set on at a ninety-degree angle to the slope of the shoulder so that the horse can carry himself "up" in front. Mr. Schumacher also looks at the connection between the neck and head. The neck must not be too thick, which would impede lateral flexion at the poll. The top of the first vertebra and the occipital bone must be flat, that is, nearly at the same height. If the first vertebra is higher, the horse will overflex too easily and come behind the bridle. If the first vertebra is too low compared to the occipital bone, it is too difficult to get the horse to be round enough in his frame. You should also be able to fit your fist in the space under and between the horse's jawbones, and there must be enough space in the throatlatch area that the horse's ability to flex is unobstructed. Check, too, Mr. Schumacher reminded, that there's enough room in the horse's mouth to accommodate a double bridle.

Not all of these features may be perfect in any given horse. If they are not, the horse must have enough natural activity in his hindquarters to help the rider to overcome these front-end conformation problems when training begins.

Another quality of great importance is the horse's flexibility. "We can't breed the gaits any bigger," Mr. Schumacher said. "So in the past ten years more and more emphasis has been placed on flexibility and temperament." With Sue Blinks's horse, Flim Flam, he demonstrated that if he pushed lightly on the horse's back, the barrel would lower. Pushing up on the horse's under-belly caused him to lift his back. The tail, he showed, should also be moveable, and the neck should be pliable and bendable from side to side.

Dr. Clayton said that to her, the sum total of conformation is how the horse moves. However, there are conformational aspects that she looks for which have a beneficial effect on soundness. One is the slope of the horse's shoulder. Horses that have the top of the scapula (shoulder blade) further back - resulting in more slope to the shoulder - are better able to absorb concussion during locomotion and stay more sound. This greater slope also puts the withers and, therefore, the saddle further back, reinforcing Mr. Schumacher's first point.

Continued on Page 12



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Dressage Winnipeg Library

The person now in charge of the Dressage Winnipeg Library is Lori Minkus-Weisner, who can be reached by email tinyavenger@home.com There are several new items in the library which were purchased in 2004, so “check them out”!



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Continued from page 9....

A second aspect is the length and slope of the humerus (the horse's "upper arm"). This bone extends from the point of the shoulder downward and to the rear, terminating at a point below the big bulge of the horse's triceps muscle and about halfway across the width of the leg. According to Dr. Clayton, for better orthopedic health, this bone should be long and the angle relatively upright. In motion the horse should have good freedom to be able to move both the bottom part of his shoulder and his elbow forward and up.

In the hindleg, the feature that Dr. Clayton most associates both with good movement and with soundness is the length and angle of the femur (the horse's "thigh bone"). The femur should be long and should slope forward from the hip joint to the stifle joint, allowing the leg to come well under the horse in motion.

"In the lower limbs," she noted, "we tend to get carried away always looking for perfection." Recent research indicates that slight deviations from the ideal vertical alignment of the joints have not proven to cause significant soundness problems. "In warmbloods about eighty percent of the horses are toed-out.... I don't get too excited about minor amounts of toe-ing in, toe-ing out or 'bench knees,' where the cannon bone is offset to the outside of the radius," Dr. Clayton said.

"In dressage horses," she added, "being a little close in the hindlegs is often a good thing. When the horse is moving, the hock naturally turns inward and the stifle naturally turns outward. This allows the hindleg to clear the horse's barrel. If the hocks are a little more in, this gives the horse more clearance between his stifles and his barrel in the lateral movements."

Looking at Flim Flam, Dr. Clayton smilingly observed that he wouldn't win a conformation competition. "He's quite narrow through the chest and he toes out a little, BUT he's one of the best horses in the world. Remember to look at the way a horse moves, not just how he stands."

On the subject of temperament, Mr. Schumacher said that a good dressage horse must be able to move well, but that in the upper levels, up to two-thirds of a horse's success springs from "a will to work, his natural sensitivity, and his inner tranquility."

"Normally those with a lot of inner tranquility are lazy, and those with a lot of sensitivity are crazy and hard to work with." Finding just the right combination is very difficult. Mr. Schumacher cited Ideaal (ridden internationally by Jo Hinnemann, Sven Rothenberger, and Gonnellen Rothenberger): "Ideaal was a horse with pretty bad conformation but a heart - unbelievable - he won his last international medal at the age of twenty. He really had these three qualities."

Continued on page 17....

Newsletter done by...

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Horsey Humor



Ways to sneak another horse home, and get it past your husband.....

14. Move the fish to the cellar, the goats to the kitchen, the uncle to the sofa and the dogs to the barn. Rotate weekly. Add a horse to the mix on the 5th week. Stop the rotation when the horse gets to the barn. Confused, but grateful, family won't question further.
13. Tell your husband that 'Ed' is here to repair the cable.
12. 'This? This isn't a horse. This is a common Black-Throated Northern Debt Precursor'.
11. Organize a clandestine Equine Underground pipeline. Connect to breeders and trainers in several states.
10. Throw a \$100 bill behind the couch. Yell "Fetch!!" While family members are fighting it out you can sneak anything (up to and including a troop of Marines) up the drive, past the house, and into the pasture.
9. Blame El Nino: The new horse washed in at high tide!
8. Wait for Halloween. Dress the new horse in a bad horse costume and march him right into the barn.
7. Swear it's your best friend's new horse, come to stay until she breaks the news to her husband. Meanwhile she can be saying the same thing to HER husband.
6. Start housing the kids out in the barn to explain your long absences from the house and your frequent comings and goings.
5. Have UPS deliver the horse, tell husband they have the wrong address
4. Big Collar, license tags. Poodle trim. Insist on calling the new mare AKC Fantasyland's Fifi Splendoria.
3. Sneak horse in at midnight. Return to house wearing only a trench coat and skimpy negligee - you guess from there
2. Don't buy another horse. Join the foreign exchange program: you feed, house and culturally broaden the horizon of a young foreign-born horse for 2 years. (Of course you have to mail the neighbor's elderly Shetland pony off to Europe in exchange).
1. 'This horse isn't ours dear. He said he's on a scavenger hunt and has to find 2 suckers with a check-book'.

(Best of luck! Haven't quite found the best one yet myself... The Editor)

“Horse sense is usually found in people with a stable mind.”



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1. Donation of \$100 or less (Sponsor will receive Recognition in Newsletters and Show Programs)

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2. Donation of \$100-\$250 (Sponsor will receive a half-page advertisement in Newsletters and Show Programs)

\$ _____ Cash ___ or "in kind" _____ (i.e. show prizes)

3. Donation of over \$250 (Sponsor will receive a full Page Advertisement in Newsletters and Show Programs and be verbally recognised with an announcement during the competitions)

\$ _____ Cash ___ or "in kind" _____ (i.e. show prizes)

Sponsors Please Note the Following:

1. Charitable Tax receipts may be issued for contributions greater than \$25. If you require a tax receipt, please make your cheque payable to "Equine Canada", rather than "Dressage Winnipeg". Charitable #: 122863210RR0001

2. All Advertising materials must be supplied by the sponsor in **tif or jpg format, MS Word or .pdf** files or as **hard copy artwork** that can be scanned in. If you are a business don't forget your logo. If you require assistance with creating your ad, or have questions concerning the requirements, please contact Myriam Dyck Ph: 795-5519 or email myriam@mts.net

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION!

Mail this form to: Kathryn Sinclair Box Box 367 Oak Bark, Mb. R0E 1J0

Continued from page 12....

With a young horse, Mr. Schumacher says, "Look at their eye." Pointing to Flim Flam, he said, "If I had seen him as a young horse, the first thing I'd notice is his natural charm and his big eyes. This is the feel that there is character there.... Watching a three year old loose in the arena, what I want to see is a horse that wants to contact me, not just one running around, crazy, with a stiff neck.... Almost like a human being, they must look at you; they must talk to you. In the long run this is what makes a better horse."



Mr. Schumacher commented that for International horses, it is important to choose one that's big enough - one that makes a good visual impression to the judges even from eighty meters away when he's at the far end of the arena.

Dr. Clayton warned, though, that horses that are very big are more difficult to keep sound. With very tall horses, the mass of the horse increases more than does the strength of the supporting tissues. Look for good-sized feet, she counseled, and ones which exactly match each other. If one front foot is considerably smaller or narrower than the other, it may signify a pre-existing problem.

For "normal" riders, Mr. Schumacher recommended that they find a horse that's the right size and proportion for their bodies. Ones that fill out your legs but are not so big that the rider's weight goes unnoticed are ideal. The actual size isn't the most important thing. Often a smaller horse with a nice neck who "carries himself big" will make a better impression and still be easier to ride.

In conclusion, both Dr. Clayton and Mr. Schumacher agreed that it is easy to pick apart any horse's conformation. But the overall picture derived from structure, flexibility, and temperament, together with his balance and how fluidly he moves, all play important roles in determining whether the horse you're looking at can do the job you want him to.

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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.

Dressage Winnipeg would like to thank our sponsors so far for 2005!

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Please consider sponsoring Dressage Winnipeg in 2005 or getting your workplace or equine-related businesses you deal with to sponsor the club! We rely upon donations from sponsors to improve our show prizes and for support of the activities of Dressage Winnipeg throughout the year. As an added incentive and to acknowledge sponsors for their contributions, some advertising is provided free of charge so this can be an opportunity for equine-related businesses to support their local sports association and get some advertising to a special target audience as well! Forms are available on page 16. If you have any questions about sponsorship, you can call Kathryn Sinclair at 444-3249 or email buckwheat_516@hotmail.com.



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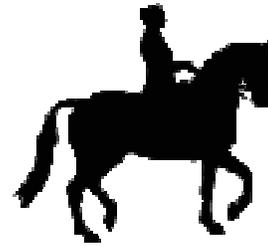
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**The de Kenyeres Junior Rider
Development Fund 2005**



Dressage Winnipeg is pleased to announce that their scholarship competition will be offered again to junior riders in 2005. Riders aged 12-18 (January 1 2005- December 31 2005), who have not won any 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 DW dressage show (or possibly) 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.)*

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 22,2005.

Dressage Winnipeg Education Coordinator:

Merelyn Hunkin

Box 206, Oakville Manitoba

Phone: 1-204-267-2889.

Email: chunkin@whpcn.net

Entry Form enclosed on other side of this page...

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 the 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: _____

THE BALANCED SEAT

by Dr. Thomas Ritter

“The rider’s posture determines his safety and comfort on his horse, as well as the precise effects of his hand and leg aids, and finally the horse’s balance, position and gait.”

Theodor Heinze, Deutsche Reitkunschtshule, (1889, 228, translation: TR).

The centered seat will always be a correct seat. The word “correct” sometimes gives rise to misunderstandings in this context. Many people take it to mean adherence to a certain superficial form. In classical terms, however, a correct seat is first and foremost a functional seat, a seat that allows the rider to influence the horse effectively, because it is balanced, straight, and supple. The outward form of this seat follows its function, i.e. the demands of balance and straightness dictate where the hands, legs, hips, and shoulders are at any given point in time.



There is a certain freedom for adjustments in the correct seat that are dictated by the horse’s balance, straightness, posture, and bend. These adjustments may at times feel quite large to the rider, but if done correctly they are barely visible for an observer.

The stillness of a good seat is an optical illusion. It is created by a great deal of movement beneath the surface. Every joint in the rider’s body has to participate in the absorption of the horse’s movement. The result is the appearance of stillness. If, on the contrary, a rider tries very hard to sit still by stiffening his muscles, the seat will become noisier and noisier. If one joint does not move as much as required, then its neighboring joints will automatically move excessively in order to compensate for the stiffness. The results are kicking legs, bouncing hands, a head-bob, or worst of all, a bouncing bottom.

The classical seat with a vertical alignment of ears, shoulders, hips, and heels, is the “neutral” position to which the rider returns immediately after all deviations that the horse may have made necessary. It is the position in which the rider is the least burdensome, even to a young horse - because he is sitting in balance with the horse. Leaving this position is either an aid, which helps the horse improve or regain his own balance and straightness, or it is an interference, which destroys the horse’s balance and straightness.

“Neutrality” is a concept I often stress in my lessons. The rider has to keep his pelvis, his hands, and legs in a position in which he can move them in all directions. A hollow back, for instance, can only swing backward, not forward, which introduces stiffness and results in an inability to sit within the horse’s movement. The same thing goes for a curled wrist, and other elements of the seat.

The basic demands to be made of a good seat, to be balanced, straight, and supple are very simple. But how do we get there? The first stumbling block that the student runs into is that the calibration of his body awareness is more or less out of sync with objective reality. You can compare the student’s feel to a measuring instrument. The more sensitive and tactful the student is, the better is the measuring instrument. However, in order to make a hi-tech instrument practically useful, it has to be properly calibrated, otherwise the readout will be useless, and we need the theoretical knowledge to analyze and interpret the readout correctly. For instance, when the student feels straight, he may actually be tipping forward, collapsing in the waist, and sitting more on one seat bone than the other. When the teacher then makes

Continued from Page 21

adjustments to the seat, so that the student really is straight (in a neutral position) in all three dimensions, he may feel as if were about to fall off on one side of the horse, and as if he were about to hit the horse's croup with the back of his head. This is one of the most disorienting phases in the student's training, yet we have all gone through it at one time or another. It is also one of the most crucial lessons every student has to learn, because only a rider who is straight in all three dimensions is able to tell whether his horse is straight or crooked, balanced or unbalanced, and without the ability to recognize these things, the rider will never make any progress with his horses. We have to make our own body awareness coincide with reality, so that objective straightness actually feels straight to us, while crookedness has to feel crooked.

Longe lessons are best suited to begin this process of re-calibration, during which the student learns to feel where the straight, neutral position lies in all three axes of his body. An excellent progression from there is a lesson in which the teacher long reins the student, because from directly behind and close up the teacher can see even the tiniest detail of the seat alignment, while at the same time feeling how the seat is affecting the horse. Even advanced students should go back to longe and long rein lessons from time to time, in order to continue to refine their sense of straightness and balance. Even in regular riding lessons, it is a good idea if the teacher begins corrections from the inside out, that is by improving the rider's straightness and balance first, before addressing the horse, because in most cases the horse will improve as a result of the rider's improved straightness and balance.

Continued on Page 23

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This re-calibration of the rider's body awareness cannot be done without a ground person. This ground person does not necessarily have to be the most gifted horseperson, but it should be someone who can see subtle changes in posture. Initially, the rider has to be shown the correct, straight alignment of his body in all three axes. The next step is to learn to listen for the horse's feedback. The horse will show an instantaneous improvement, sometimes a quite dramatic improvement, as soon as the rider has found the correct, balanced, and straight alignment of his body. The student has to learn to trust his horse in this respect. If the horse softens and relaxes, the seat cannot be too far off the mark, no matter how uncomfortable and strange it may feel to the rider at the time. If it does, in fact, feel off center, there are two possible explanations. The horse either requires a slightly off-center position due to his own crookedness, which should help to improve the horse's straightness. Or it is an indication that the rider's subjective sense of straightness and reality are still two different things.

The third major demand to be made of a good seat is suppleness, and this is a big problem area for most riders. A few riders tend to be too loose, i.e. their muscle tone is too low, which makes them unstable and floppy. The majority of riders, however, are stiff in certain parts of their body, most notably in their hip flexor muscles, adductors, hamstrings, piriformis, and glutes, which makes it impossible for them to follow the horse's movement with their hips. At the same time the abdominals, obliques, and back muscles are almost always too weak. Toning and stretching the relevant musculature is something that can be done very well off the horse as a preparation.

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On the horse, the rider can try to improve his suppleness by actively contracting the tight muscles for a brief moment, followed by a release, so that the pulsating alternation of contraction and release eventually leads to a deeper stretch of the muscles. Holding the body parts in place with a permanent, unchanging muscle contraction, leads to stiffness. The combination of both relaxation and contraction is what ultimately creates suppleness. A good teaching tool is to let the student exaggerate the inward rotation, the backward swing and the outward lift of the thigh for a few seconds at a time, so that the leg falls into the right place by itself, when the student relaxes his legs again. This exercise should be started at the halt, but later on it can be done in all three gaits at the long line. It's a great cure for "grippers".

One of the goals of dressage is to recreate the natural beauty of the horse's gaits under the rider, so that the horse moves as beautifully under the weight of the rider as he does at liberty. In order to achieve this, the swinging of the horse's back has to pass through the seat of the rider undiminished. The back has to be able to rise and fall with the same ease, regardless of the rider's presence. If the rider merely sits passively, his weight alone can sometimes be enough to diminish the freedom of movement of the horse's back. In these moments, the rider has to enhance the upswing of the horse's back with an active contraction of his abdominal muscles, which helps the rider's pelvis to swing more forward-upward, without tilting forward, however. Shifting one's weight into the inner thighs and knees can sometimes be helpful.

A final remark concerns the ability to separate all the different muscle groups from each other. The rider has to learn to contract only those muscles that are absolutely necessary for the specific task at hand, no more and no less. The rider has to be able, for example, to firm up the muscles surrounding his waist, while at the same time relaxing his hips. It has to be possible to use thighs and calves separately from each other, because they have different areas of influence.

Continued on Page 25

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Continued from Page 24.....

The hands have to be independent of the seat and legs, while at the same time being connected to them. This separation of the various muscles is what enables the rider to follow the horse's movement with a supple, yet stable seat, and to apply each aid precisely without unwanted interferences in other parts of the body. This way, all aids become like the instruments in an orchestra that have their own distinct scores to play, yet they all play in harmony with each other.

A correct seat is first and foremost a functional seat, a seat that allows the rider to influence the horse effectively, because it is balanced, straight, and supple.

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Dressage Winnipeg
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Dressage Canada News

News from the FEI—FEI Junior Dressage Tests - version 2003 will still be in force for 2005 and new tests will be introduced for 2006.

Rule Changes & Corrections effective January 2005 are available at:

<http://www.dressagecanada.org/pdf/FEI-Rulechanges-2005.pdf>

Christine Peters New Dressage Coordinator - Sunday, April 03, 2005

Dressage Canada is very pleased to announce that Christine Peters is the new Dressage Coordinator at the Equine Canada effective March 21, 2005.

"I am excited and honoured to have the opportunity to work with the Dressage Canada Board, all its Committees and our Canadian Dressage Athletes," said Peters. "I look forward to assisting with established and new Dressage Canada initiatives and programs that will put our Athletes on podiums and will advance Canadian Coaches, Officials and grass root riders to new heights."

Peters, who has been riding since the age of 5, has been with Equine Canada since 2000 as the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director as well as Assistant to the Olympic disciplines of Eventing and Dressage. Her experience and knowledge will prove to be a valuable asset to Dressage Canada in her new role.

Evi Strasser and Leslie Reid Represent Canada at World Cup Dressage Final

Karen Robinson for Dressage Canada - Thursday, April 21, 2005



One person's misfortune can be another's good luck, as turned out to be the case for Evi Strasser and Quantum Tyme at the World Cup Final in Las Vegas. Germany's strongest contenders for the title, Isabell Werth and Anthony FRH, were forced to withdraw earlier this week. At eighteen, Anthony would have been the oldest horse in the final; this was to be his swan song. Strasser, who was in Las Vegas to compete in a national Grand Prix class on April 22, was invited to take the spot vacated by Werth. In all, eighteen horses from ten countries competed in the first round of competition, with the top twelve advancing to the final on Saturday.

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. Photo © Kathryn Eituis

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Are you interested in riding and designing a Musical Freestyle?

StoneHill Farm has arranged for a Clinic with Karen Robinson of Applause Dressage!

May 14 and 15, 2005

The purpose of a freestyle clinic is to give riders the skills to create their own freestyle. Because this clinic does not focus on technical aspect of training, freestyle clinics are fun for both riders and horses. The private mounted sessions are interesting and educational for spectators, whether they are riders, coaches' judges or non-riding friends and family!

While the rider will benefit from a single session, 2 sessions are recommended in order to cover the entire design process. Day one is music, day 2 is choreography. If you can only attend one, that is ok, choreography will be touched on at the end of the session. Go to www.applausedressage.com for more information about Karen and her many famous clients!

FORMAT: Saturday, May 14, 9:00 to 12:00 - Seminar on how freestyles are created and judged. You will learn about every step of the design process and what to consider when choosing music. Karen welcomes questions!

LOCATION: Days Inn, 2130 Currie Blvd. South of Shoppers Mall just off 18th street

Saturday, May 14, 2:00 to 5:00 – 4 scheduled 45 minute private rides

Sunday, May 15 9:00 to 5:00 – 8 scheduled 45 minute private rides

COSTS of CLINIC:

Riders – 2 - 45 minute private lessons, as well as the Saturday morning lecture and spectator privileges for the entire weekend - \$ 150.00

Riders – 1 – 45 minute private lesson as well as the Saturday morning lecture and spectator privileges for the entire weekend - \$ 85.00

Auditor – Saturday morning lecture as well as spectator privileges for the entire weekend - \$ 35.00

LOCATION: StoneHill Farm- 13 miles south of the Shoppers Mall on Highway 10, turn east on the Treesbank Road for 2 and ½ miles.

These spaces will fill up quickly, please reserve your riding space and lecture space by returning the attached form as soon as possible. Canteen will be available on Sunday for lunch at StoneHill Farm.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Auditor - \$ 35.00 One Ride - \$ 85.00 Preferred time on Sunday _____

Two Rides – \$ 150.00 Preferred ride times _____

Please forward application and cheque to: StoneHill Farm Box 20019 Brandon, Manitoba R7A 6Y8 For additional information please call Lori at 727-2922. All riders must be Manitoba Horse Council members.

All Dressage Winnipeg Members:

For those Dressage Winnipeg Association members who may be considering attending the Musical Freestyle Clinic being held at StoneHill Farm on May 14 and 15, we have contacted the Days Inn regarding hotel rates.

The Days Inn at 3130 Currie Boulevard is located just south of the Shoppers Mall which is on 18th street (second entrance into Brandon off the Trans Canada Highway) The Saturday morning lecture with Karen is being held there. The days Inn offers a rate of 75.50 per night. However, if you have a group coming out, and you are ok with adjoining rooms, for 119.00 you can get two adjoining rooms, one with a king size bed and one with 2 queen sized beds! What a deal! Plus they have a breakfast included available from 6 – 10!

Come on out! Days Inn, 3130 Curry Boulevard, Brandon 1-888-213-2192, 727-3600

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