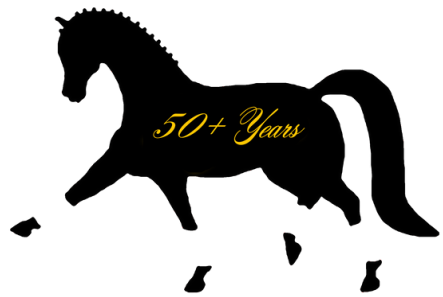


THE READER

The official newsletter of CenterLine Dressage



CenterLine Dressage

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President's Letter

by Theresa Smith

Help, I have horse hair in my lip gloss!

Happy Spring! I hope you have been enjoying the sunshine and unseasonably warm temperatures. If your horses are like mine, they are shedding their winter coats. I keep my riding pony at home most of the year and only blanket her during subzero weather. Callie is blessed with a very thick coat, but both of us curse that coat during the spring. She's hot and sweaty it is over 50 degrees or she exercises. I am constantly covered in pony hair anytime I get near her, but especially if I groom her. Yesterday I was pulling out chunks of loose hair. At this rate I should have a shiny pony soon!



We had a successful braiding clinic at Pratense Farms in February. Tae Erickson was kind enough to share her methods and tips with us again this year. If you missed her demonstration, she will be giving another at the ARAB, Inc. Microchipping Clinic at the Illinois State Fairgrounds on March 23. Consider supporting our friends at ARAB, Inc. by attending their event.

Our next educational clinic was March 10, also at Pratense Farms. Susan and Helena Rosse demonstrated leg wrapping and bandaging. They also provided an explanation of the different equipment and techniques.

We have applied to have IceBreaker scores recognized by St. Louis Area Dressage Society. Let's take advantage of this opportunity and invite our St. Louis area horse show friends to bring their students and horses to our April 20-21 schooling show at the Illinois State Fairgrounds.

I am looking for volunteers for IceBreaker. If you are interested in working a 3-4 hour shift, please let me know. We will need ring stewards, scribes, runners, and people to set up and tear down the dressage arena. Please email me at president@centerline-dressage.com. If you will be showing, maybe a family member or friend can volunteer. If you aren't available to volunteer for the April show, remember we will have shows on June 22 & 23 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, plus on July 6 at Tower Hill Equestrian Center.

Enthusiastically,
Theresa Smith

Why Do We Send Someone to the USDF Annual Convention?

by Theresa Smith, 2022 and 2023 CLD Delegate to the USDF Conventions

2023 was my second year attending the USDF Annual Convention to represent our GMO (Group Member Organization), CenterLine Dressage. I enjoyed the experience both years because I enjoy education and meeting people. The Convention is expensive for the club and a sacrifice for the person attending. It can be a Wednesday through Sunday trip some years. That is a lot of time away from work and home. However, I believe it is important for our club to be represented there.

The Adequan/USDF Annual Convention was November 30 through December 3, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Lexington, Kentucky. USDF recognized GMOs celebrating their 50 year anniversary. In 2023, the convention was November 29 through December 2 at the Hilton Omaha – Nebraska where we celebrated USDF's 50th anniversary.

Meetings begin at 8:00 a.m. and continue until after 5:00 p.m. most days. It's a grueling schedule of listening to committees update us on what they worked on the previous year and sharing their goals for the new year. We also attend educational presentations and roundtable meetings with other GMOs our size.

Representation in the Board of Governors Meeting

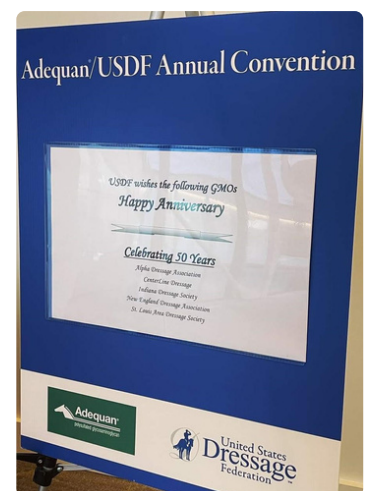
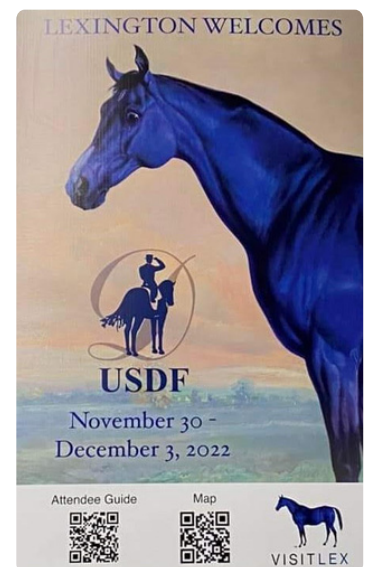
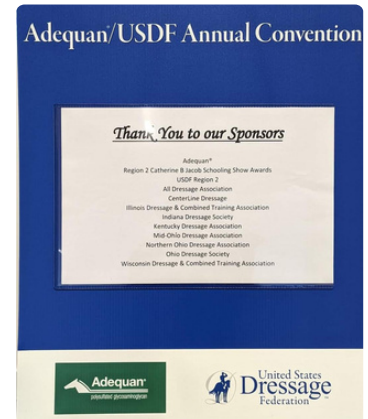
Our most basic obligation is to attend the Board of Governors' Meetings and cast votes as a representative of CenterLine Dressage. I keep an open mind when listening to the sometimes-heated discussions, including the side discussions at breaks. I make sure to cast my votes based on what I think will benefit our GMO.

The Board of Governors' Meetings occur over two days. We vote on the final day. We cover the standard board meeting procedures such as approving the budget and voting on executive board members. However, the topic I find most important is rule changes and proposed rule changes. USDF does an excellent job informing us of potential USEF rule changes that are of concern to dressage. They also make sure to recommend the best way to submit our concerns to USEF. Then I bring this information back to our board.

Education

I am often asked what my favorite part of the convention was. In 2022, I was impressed by the presentation on Equine Podiatry by Craig Lesser, DVM, CF. He is a shareholder of Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky.

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Why Do We Send Someone to the USDF Annual Convention? cont.

He shared information on lameness, treating laminitis with radiology & custom shoes, and infectious processes of the hoof, including the use of medical-grade maggots. In 2023, it was a presentation on sport horse conformation by Kristi Wysocki. This is part of the 2-Day USDF Sport Horse Seminar offered July 27-28, 2024 at Hara de Vess Stable in Wichita, KS. The presentation I attended focused on how to assess your horse's conformation and use that information to develop a personalized training program.

Networking

CLD board member Paula Briney attended as a Participating Member for Region 2. She did an excellent job of introducing me to people from executive board members, judges, technical delegates, and show managers as well as to her personal friends. These relationships are important to develop when a GMO wishes to offer rated shows.

In 2022, I had the opportunity to meet my favorite author of dressage content, Beth Baumert. I was able to speak to her one-on-one and share how both of her books have impacted my riding. I recommend her books to all levels: *When Two Spines Align: Dressage Dynamics* and *How Two Minds Meet: The Mental Dynamics of Dressage*.

Structure

At my first convention, I immediately noticed how USDF utilizes committees to get things done. Committees accomplish specific tasks, and the Committee Chair brings that information to the Executive Board. The board does not try to do everything; they know that they can't. This is perhaps the most important thing that I brought back from my first convention. I am attempting to implement this in our club.



A possible perk of attending the USDF convention: you might win one of the baskets donated by different GMO's for door prizes to those attending the Board of Delegates' meetings. Theresa Smith won the basket donated by SEDA, Southern Eventing and Dressage Association, lots of goodies stuffed a LeMieux bag.



Region 2 meeting at the 2023 USDF Convention, Omaha, two CLD'ers in the front row.

Preparation Is Key

by Susan Rosse



Last summer Sangamon Valley Pony Club sent a team of 5 riders and 4 horses north to participate in the North Central Prairie Regional Dressage Rally. This team consisted of Libbie South, Theresa Smith, Carli McKelvey, Helena Rosse and myself, all members of CLD, and our worthy mounts. Everyone approached this competition with a little something different to prove and aim for. Rally is a Pony Club competition that allows Pony Club to test their members on the standards of proficiency that are expected as you move up through the levels of Pony Club, while giving members a chance to compete and show off their skills. Someone who is newer to Pony Club is expected to show up clean and mostly put together, while someone who is certified higher is required to show up with professional horsemanship skills and higher levels of organization. All that being said, Rally, as any competition does, has the ability to teach us something about ourselves and provide ways we can improve for the future. For me, the most important reminder that I walked away with from this competition was to always be prepared.

Now I have shown for years at this point and am used to taking a certain amount of stuff that I may need, but that I really hope I do not need. You know when packing the trailer turns from packing the bare essentials, into taking everything but the kitchen sink! We had to take items ranging from extra buckets or extra hay to something like an extra halter or set of stirrups in case something breaks. Simple, but it all adds up! Pony Club likes to test you on this and has a requirement list of 87 things that you must be able to provide at a moment's notice in your your tackroom. Not only must it be there, but it must also be in date and often has an amount requirement. This list is not totally out in left field; it contains all your frequently reached for items that are regularly part of your trailer. We just had to find it all and have it all handy! The equipment list is divided into 7 different kits like tack cleaning, First Aid for horse and human, extra equipment, and even tack/feed room organization. While being tedious and irritating at times, it was really nice to stop and check everything was there.

Here is your public service announcement for the day; stop and

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Left to right in the exemplary tack room, Barn Manager Libby South, Susan Rosse, and Theresa Smith.

Preparation Is Key cont.

recheck your show stuff before the season gets to us! Not only should you be preparing your horse and yourself for the upcoming show season, but preparing your trailer and equipment! Check to make sure you still have enough of your favorite saddle soap and conditioner. Or that you picked up some shampoo and conditioner to make your horse shine in the ring this year. If you haul your own horse, have you had your trailer looked at in the last year? Or do you have a fire extinguisher in the trailer somewhere accessible in case you may need it? What about a thermometer or wraps or wound dressing that may be needed in an emergency situation? Are those handy and ready to use? Pony Club likes to focus on the details, but there are times when we need to be reminded of those details. Preparedness is key in this world. We very readily take the time to prepare our horses and minds for the upcoming tests that we are planning to ride. But we should not forget to prepare our trailers and show setups too!

Rally had a way of reminding all of us that there are many types of preparation when it comes to showing horses. When we are prepared, it does not really matter that our riding conditions are less than favorable and the weather has conspired to flood the whole venue. In the end all the long hours of organizing and preparation were worth it as the SVPC team walked away with two blues in Horsemanagement and overall scores. Our tackroom was used as an example of a professional level setup and our horses were praised for their turnout. It was overall a great learning experience plus we had fun!



Left to Right with some of their awards: Theresa Smith, Susan Rosse, Helena Rosse, and Libbie South. (Not pictured, Carli McKelvey.)

Overcoming Anxiety in the Saddle: A Journey Towards Enjoyable Riding

by Deb Bonner



Riding horses is a complex dance of trust, skill, and emotion, blending the boundaries between human and animal to achieve moments of pure harmony. Yet, for many of us, the path to this harmony is often paved with challenges, not least among them the shadow of anxiety that can loom large in the saddle. As an equestrian with over four decades mostly in the saddle, I've navigated this path myself, learning that while anxiety can be a formidable opponent, it's one we can all learn to manage with patience, understanding, and a bit of perseverance.

The Impact of Early Experiences

My own journey with riding anxiety began just a year into my equestrian career during a summer camp. A sudden and unexpected bolt from a horse led to a serious accident that left me with significant injuries and a deep-seated fear. Witnessing a fellow rider suffer even more grave consequences only compounded this fear, embedding a level of caution and anxiety in my approach to riding that has taken years to understand and address.

While not all of us have experiences that leave such a lasting impression, for some reason, our fellow riders love to share their stories of their worst tumbles. We all know we will likely fall at some point during our riding careers. Hearing about all the worst-case scenarios can profoundly impact your confidence level. To those of us who love sharing war stories, please take a moment and consider your words carefully. How may those words affect your audience?

Acknowledging Anxiety

First and foremost, it's crucial to acknowledge that feeling nervous or anxious in the saddle is entirely normal. Riding is an unpredictable sport, and the risks are real. However, how we confront and manage these feelings defines our riding experience. Recognizing anxiety as a common thread among all riders can foster a supportive community where experiences and coping strategies are shared openly. In a recent conversation with several amateur and professional riders, one woman said we all fear falling and what it could mean to our quality of life. The catch is not to let that inner dialogue become the dominant voice in your head--something that can be far easier said than done!

Keeping Thoughts in Check: The What-Ifs of Riding

One time, my horse spooked at his own steaming pile of... you know... he left going around the arena. But, because there was no steaming pile there before – and there is now- in his mind, this was some sort of witchcraft and, therefore, to be avoided at all costs. I wasn't ready for this reaction, and fortunately, it wasn't that big of a spook. I easily stayed on, but my mind shot off at full speed, thinking if he spooked at poop, what else was he going to spook at?

Managing anxiety as a rider involves reining in our own thoughts, particularly the tendency to fixate on the myriad of things that could potentially go wrong, from the innocuous rustle of a plastic bag to the sudden clatter of melting ice sliding off the arena roof. The equestrian world is packed with these

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Overcoming Anxiety in the Saddle: A Journey Towards Enjoyable Riding cont

unpredictable moments that can send our minds racing down a rabbit hole of 'what-ifs.' What if my horse spooks? What if there's a slip on less-than-ideal footing? These thoughts, while rooted in legitimate concerns for safety and preparedness, can often amplify our anxiety rather than mitigate it.

Acknowledging these concerns and cultivating a mindset that focuses on the present moment rather than the multitude of uncontrollable variables is essential. This involves training ourselves to redirect our focus from fear of the potential to confidence in our preparation and ability to respond. Just as we train our horses to trust us in uncertain situations, we must train our minds to trust in our skills and to stay grounded in the reality of the moment, not lost in the maze of what could happen. This shift doesn't happen overnight but is a gradual process of building riding competency to produce confidence in ourselves and our equine partners. We can handle whatever comes our way with calmness and assurance.

Trust and Progress at Your Own Pace

Central to overcoming riding anxiety is the relationship between rider and trainer. A good trainer understands the delicate balance between pushing a rider to improve and knowing when to pull back. It's about stepping out of your comfort zone at a pace that feels manageable, not one that exacerbates anxiety. Riders must feel empowered to communicate their comfort levels and to trust their trainers to respect these boundaries, ensuring progression without pressure.

While it is essential to remember that we don't grow in our comfort zone and will have to take that leap of faith to get to the next level, do not let a trainer's goals become yours- if you are not on the same page. Not everyone wants to show, and not everyone wants to ride the upper levels. For some of us, riding is a form of exercise and an opportunity to socialize with people who share a common interest. If your trainer does not respect your wishes and boundaries, it may be time to look for a new one.

Embracing the Journey

Experience, I have found, is a significant factor in alleviating anxiety. The more time you spend in the saddle, the more adept you become at handling the unexpected. Yet, it's important to treat each day as a unique opportunity for growth. Some days, ambitious goals feel within reach, while on others, you may feel like you have never been in the saddle before. Recognizing and adapting these fluctuations is key to a healthy riding mindset.

Celebrating Small Victories

Perhaps most importantly, riding should always bring joy. Amidst the focus on overcoming anxiety and achieving technical proficiency, finding moments of happiness and pride in the small victories is vital. Whether it's a successful training session, a peaceful trail ride, or simply enjoying your horse's company, these moments remind us why we ride.

Anxiety in the saddle is a journey many of us face, yet it's one that can be navigated successfully with patience, understanding, and the proper support. By fostering open communication with trainers, embracing each ride as a unique opportunity, and celebrating the small victories, we can all find a path to enjoyable riding. Remember, in the grand scheme of equestrian life, it's not just about the ribbons or accolades, but the joy and fulfillment we find along the way.

CLD BIO -Marilyn Weber, CLD Secretary



Marilyn Weber has been a member of CLD since the early 1990's. Marilyn has been on the board for many years serving first in the position of awards and currently as secretary. Arabian dressage horses are her focus. Currently Marilyn and her students are competing at all of the national levels. In the past she has trained and shown horses through I-1. Additionally, she has trained and competed in pleasure driving, western pleasure, hunter pleasure, saddle seat, native costume and trail. Marilyn did performances at several Sir celebrations riding side saddle. At one celebration, Marilyn rode in a pas de deux side saddle with one of her students.

In recent years she has become active in western dressage and has a "r" judging license. Marilyn has won WDAA World Championships in levels Basic through Level 3. She has earned her gold medal and belt buckle in western dressage as well as bronze and silver medals in USDF competition. In 2023 she was Arabian Horse Association National Champion in Third Level dressage for Half-Arabians. Additionally, she had the WDAA World Champion Musical Freestyle for Levels 1-5 and also received the high score for all freestyles at that championship show.

My road to my Western Dressage judging "r" started at the 2018 judging seminar in Denver. I was auditing and had it suggested that I upgrade to a judging candidate. I did and from then on have looked at rides with a slightly different perspective. I started my apprentice judging in the spring of 2018. My first show was on a balmy day that required coveralls, hat and gloves. I believe it snowed on me driving home! To get licensed at that time you had to apprentice judge a specific number of rides at each test of the levels Introductory, Basic and Level 1. I was lucky to have a big show near St Louis so that I could get many rides at each test. Three separate shows are required. I was able to apprentice at two more shows in Illinois.



R Genga, Region II Reserve Champion, Western Hack. Marilyn Weber.



R Genga, Show Horse Nationals Champion, Third Level Half-Arabian

In January of 2019 I went to Ocala to apprentice with two fantastic Florida judges. The temperatures here were in the below zero range so Florida seemed like a good plan. Saturday was a fairly pleasant day. The schedule was adjusted so that my scribe who was working on her "R" had to apprentice in the other ring so I did some self-scribing and so did she. It's a skill that was useful since it teaches brevity! Sunday on the other hand was cold, windy and rainy. I think it felt colder than the negative temperatures I left and returned to. I think I was wearing all of the clothes I brought in layers. It was still shivering cold. I feel sorry for scribes trying to write legibly while trying to keep fingers from freezing.

After attending the 2020 judging seminar I video tested and was found satisfactory. I then applied for my license. In April at the board meeting I was awarded my Licensed Official status. Video testing is definitely an experience and takes some time to figure out. The faster the WIFI speed the better. My slower speed creates some interesting buffering and hiccups!

I would highly recommend attending judging seminars or L programs. It gives you the judges' perspective which is somewhat different from that of riders, trainers and spectators. Auditing can be a wonderful tool for your education. ~ Marilyn Weber

Calendar

April 6-7 April at the Arch I & II, National Equestrian Center, Lake St. Louis, MO

April 20-21 ARAB, Inc. AVS & CLD IceBreaker Schooling Show, IL State Fairgrounds

May 23-26 Region XI Sport Horse Champs & Pre-Show, Illinois State Fairgrounds

June 22-23 CenterLine Classic I and II, Illinois State Fairgrounds

July 6 CLD FireCracker Schooling Show, Tower Hill Equestrian Center, Dawson.

July 30 - August 4 NAYC, Traverse City, MI

September 9-14 Arabian Sport Horse Nationals, World Equestrian Center, Wilmington, OH

September 12-15 Region 2 Championships, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington

October 10-13 Region 4 Dressage Championships, National Equestrian Center, Lake St. Louis, MO

If you would like to submit an event to our calendar, please email the details to centerlinedressage.illinois@gmail.com. Events must be dressage or equine care/training related.

Nominate your horse for the 2024 End of Year Awards



Helena Rosse | 2023 AA Western
Dressage Level 1 Champion

It's never too early to nominate your horse for CLD year-end awards. CLD year-end awards are for specific horse/rider combinations. A separate form must be submitted for each horse/rider combination per year. Horse/rider combination nomination is appreciated before scores are earned.

Membership fees for both rider and horse owner must be current.

Nominate your horse at centerlinedressage.com/horse-nomination/submit-scores