From: Amie Di Piazza
To: karen@richardswf.com;
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Alpha Dressage Association

Alpha Dressage Association Newsletter

June 2009

Greetings!

Hi Everyone,
We had a wonderful show at Shady Oaks. The weather was perfect and all that rode had a great time. Many thanks to Rene for the wonderful use of her place. Also lots of thanks goes to Martha. Robin, Amie, Anna, and Karen for all of their help. These things would not be done with out all all of them.
The last meeting we had at Hawk's Flight farm. It was so much fun to see all of the great babies. They were so beautiful.
The next meeting will be at my house so we can discuss upcoming shows and next years Double Delight. I promise that the judges will be better.
In this newsletter you will fiind the award requirements for the year.
Till next time, Stay riding,
Betty

"Dressage Unscrambled"

An Excerpt from Bill Woods' new book...

As some of you already know, last year I started writing what I thought would become entries to a blog that I'd put up on our Four Winds Farm website. To make a long story short, I got a trifle carried away, and the result became a book which Half Halt Press will release late this summer. The book is meant to be instructive, but not as painfully heavy as a lot of the dressage tomes that circulate. Some of the stories are meant to illuminate technical issues in a slightly different light. Other entries are meant to help people understand that the things they worry about, EVERYONE worries about. They are not alone! And there are stories that are just supposed to make you laugh.

The book, by the way, is titled **Dressage Unscrambled**. Your newsletter maven, Amie, invited me to send her some material, so here is one of the 124 little articles that make up my book. I hope you like it.

Bill Woods

Vending Machines

I must have been traveling too often, staying in too many hotels. You know how down by the ice machine next to the elevators they always have vending machines? The ones with a big Plexiglas window and a whole mess of snack items-Sun Chips and Fritos and Ring Dings and Lorna Doones-each stacked on copper spiral holders all in rows and columns? And you put your 75 or 85 cents in the slot, the machine blinks READY READY READY, and all you have to do is "Select." Punch B-4 and grind grind fwoop, out the slot at the bottom comes your Snickers. E-6 and fwoop, here are the Cheetos. In other words, once you've made the preparation, the machine is equally, universally prepared to deliver you anything on its menu.

It strikes me that it isn't a bad idea to think of making your horse a bit like one of those vending machines. This is what I mean:

It drives me a little batty when someone has been trotting around for five minutes; I ask them to make a transition to halt; and they say, "Wait, I have to prepare him." Or if they've made six halt-trots: I ask them to canter, and they give me the "wait a minute" response. Or after six leg yieldings they have to "get the horse ready" for a turn on the haunches.

Do I mean you shouldn't prepare for those things? It's not that at all. But like the vending machine that, once prepared, is able to deliver you *anything*, so should your horse (if he's on the aids) be equally ready to offer you whatever movement you need next with no more than the appropriate positioning and a rebalancing half halt or two.

"Preparation" should be universal. Ready for one thing is supposed to be ready for all things.

An underlying theme within the subtlety of riding a dressage horse is keeping up a fairly constant nonverbal conversational stream of

Dr.Gerd Heuschmann

Upcoming Clinic....

Dr. Gerd Heuschmann Clinic October 30 - November 1, 2009

I am thrilled to announce that Dr. Gerd Heuschmann, author of the book "Tug of War" and DVD "If Horses Could Speak" is coming to Jacksonville for a three day clinic on October 30th - November 1st, 2009. On Friday October 30th Dr. Heuschmann will be giving his lecture which is highly informative and a must for any horse enthusiast of any discipline. On Saturday October 31st and Sunday November 1st those that register early will have a chance to ride with Dr. Heuschmann. Rides are $250, lecture is $50, auditing both days and lecture $125. If you wish just to audit only the cost will be $80 for both days, $45 for one day. For more information please contact Sandy Mooney at 904-463-2908 or e-mail me at housedoctorinc@comcast.net or go to http://www.wix.com/renardsromeo/drgerdheuschmannjax

Lecture seats are limited, ride slots are going fast so book early to ensure your spot with this wonderful horseman.

Shelley Van den Neste

Upcoming Clinic at "InStride"
Hosted by Donna Blem
August 7,8,9

Shelley Van den Neste is a United States Dressage Federation (USDF) Bronze and Silver medalist, and has trained several horses and students to Federation Equestrian International (FEI) levels. She is also a USDF "L" program graduate with Distinction and actively judges schooling dressage shows. Previously, she was the Equestrian Facility Manager for the Palm Beach County Jim Brandon Equestrian Center, an eight arena multi-venue horse park, opened 2006, in Palm Beach County Florida.

Along with her students, she has amassed Regional and National championships in Saddleseat Equitation, Western Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure, Hunt-seat Equitation and Dressage through Intermediare 1 at the National Show Horse Finals, Arabian and Half-Arabian Nationals, and the Arabian and Half-Arabian Sport Horse Nationals.

Since 1995 Shelley has ridden with Michael Beining, Sue Blinks, Jan Ebeling, Carole Lavel, Walter Zettl, and Miguel Duarte. In addition to her regular training schedule, she has been selected to be a rider at several USDF adult clinics and a demonstration rider at

"If I wanted to, could I _____?" with him. In the beginning, the questions are blatant, broad strokes: Ask him to make a transition; Did it work? From his responses trial by trial, you learn to file away in your memory what he needed to feel like in advance for that transition to have worked when and how you wanted it to.

Tuning in to how a horse has to feel before the fact brings you to where, like lawyers in those courtroom novels, you never really ask an overt question without knowing what the answer is going to be. Asking for a downward transition and finding it's not there becomes an "oops moment." We try to avoid those!

An old rulebook definition of a half halt described it in terms of creating or re-creating attention and balance. If he's upright, holding himself, alignable, and listening to you, any movement ought to be there for you. And by maintaining the intimate interaction with him that queries "Could I," you encourage and enforce the balance and attention required to make all things universally and equally available.

Like the vending machine.

Hurricane Tips...

Flooding

If your property is in a flood-prone area:

- Do some planning. Have an evacuation route mapped out; store feed, chemicals, and pesticides where water can't reach them; build mounds in pastures so livestock can get up out of deep water.
- During a flood, get animals out of barns before they can be trapped by rising water. Provide horses with plenty of hay and clean drinking water.
- A few days of walking in shallow water can usually be tolerated by most large animals. After the water goes down, watch horses for disease signs: fever, lameness, difficulty breathing, muscle twitching, swelling or edema, feed refusal.
- Inspect stored feed and hay for dampness or contamination by chemicals and pesticides.
- Check fields and fence rows for debris, and remove dangerous material before turning out horses. Use fly spray to control insects that tend to proliferate after flooding.
- Avoid driving vehicles and machinery on wet fields. Pastures and hayfields (alfalfa, fescue, orchardgrass) can survive several days of fresh-water flooding, and silt can be left on fields if it isn't more than a few inches deep. Weed control may be needed in stressed fields. Contact the local agricultural extension service for advice about soil tests and fertilizing.

ADA Meeting

The next ADA meeting will be at Betty Browns' house at 7610 Saddle Creek Trail, Tuesday June 9th at 7 pm.

Be There or Be Square

National events
and for videos."

Officers

President
Betty Brown
925-1575
bmb7601@verizon.net

Vice President
Robin Sego
322-0494
Sego1@juno.com

Secretary
Karen Abbattista
karen@richardswf.com

Treasurer
Martha Koehnlein
485-2337
koeh2337@comcast.net

Historian
CarylFaso
pacchman1@hotmail.com

Publicity
Anna Bergenstrahle
anna0406@MSN.com

Newsletter/Web Editor
Amie DiPiazza
356-3713
alpha.dressage@yahoo.com

If calling from outside the area please dial 941 area code

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Alpha Dressage Association

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Alpha Dressage Association | 2642 Grand Cayman St. | Sarasota | FL | 34231