

TVDCTA BITS

New Year, New 1
Board

From the 2
Editor

Letter From 2
Our President

Arthur Kottas 3
Clinic

George Morris 4
Horsemaster-
ship Training
Sessions

DHD Domi- 5
nates at
Nationals

USDF 6
Announces
New
Instructor/
Trainer Faculty

Educational 6
Outlets

Riding begins 7
and end with
the Upper Body

Ads and 8-9
Classifieds

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*All advertising will be
handled through
tvdcta@gmail.com.

NEW YEAR, NEW BOARD



Let's give a big welcome and thank you to our new board of
directors!

Contact us at tvdcta@gmail.com

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FROM THE EDITOR

I am all for New Years' Resolutions. One of mine is to get better at making this newsletter (I'm sure you're all thankful for that!). I'd really like to make this newsletter something that TVDCTA members look forward to reading. I'd love to hear from anyone who has any requests about future articles, things to include, etc. I'd also love to hear what you are all doing in your own horsey lives. Please email me if you have anything you would like for me to include in future issues.

In the spirit of self-improvement, I've made education the focus of this issue. I think attending clinics is a great way to improve one's riding skills. Reading (especially books from the TVDCTA library) is incredibly beneficial as well. I also believe that we should all take advantage of all the free educational material that is available to us online.

Best of luck as we enter this new year!

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Looking over our membership list I see how diverse our TVDCTA group is. We have members who have been riding only a few years, and some who have been riding for over half a century. We have some who have barrel raced, cleared many cross country fences, ridden on the beach of every coast, and others who have focused solely on dressage. Some of us keep our horses at home, others board. Some of us own our horses, some lease horses, some of us ride on lesson horses. Some of our members look forward to riding in their first recognized show this year, others proudly display the USDF Rider Gold Medal they have earned. Such diversity comes with something in common: we all love our horses, we all love the sport. Some of us teach, all of us learn.

I hope as a group we spend this year learning to take advantage of our diverse interests, talents, and capabilities and celebrate our common commitment to the mystical four-legged creatures that bring us bountiful joy, magnificent challenge, and equally abundant rewards. 2014 is the year of the horse; we can't make it anything else but sensational!

~Sally Colocho
TVDCTA President

MISSION STATEMENT

TVDCTA is a non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging a high standard of horsemanship through the use of classical dressage techniques. The TVDCTA will disseminate educational material, sponsor and promote activities (such as clinics, seminars and competitions), and cooperate with other local and national organizations in developing and promoting better horsemanship.

ARTHUR KOTTAS CLINIC AT SHANNONDALE FARM



Shannondale Farm (Alpharetta, GA) hosted clinician Arthur Kottas, former head of the Spanish Riding School, in November. I went expecting to be totally mystified; however, I left feeling slightly disappointed and disillusioned.

I'm not sure what I was hoping to gain from listening to Mr. Kottas, but I think I really wanted the SECRET to riding like a SRS rider. Unfortunately there is no secret, or at least, Mr. Kottas was not able to articulate it within the nine hour day. He said nothing extraordinary – the day was a blur of “inside leg to outside rein” as well as “sit deeper.” No rider made any magical improvements. The average were criticized and the exceptional were praised, but no real differences could be seen from the beginning of the rides to the end. Although I learned nothing drastically new about riding, I did learn some important information about the nature of clinics.

First off, the reality of horseman is that few are both exceptional riders as well as exceptional teachers. There is no doubt that Mr. Kottas can RIDE, but he cannot teach. He was unable to really explain how to physically accomplish the goals he kept setting forward to the riders. He would yell out elements to accomplish, such as a lighter forehand, but he rarely told a rider how to physically ask for such a thing. One young man could not sit his horse's trot to save his soul. Mr. Kottas took away his stirrups and just kept telling him to stop bouncing. Not shockingly, the man never managed to sit his horse well, despite all of the yelling. A good teacher would have explained to the man how to hold himself, which muscles to contract and which muscles to relax in order to develop a good sitting trot.

Because of this reality, I urge anyone considering paying a large sum of money to ride with a famous person to first audit a clinic by said star. Make sure that he can teach, that his teaching style will meld with your learning style, that he is open to teaching people at your level, and that he customizes his lesson for each horse/rider pair. If you cannot physically go and watch a clinic by your idol, then look up videos on YouTube.

I would also like to discuss what the riders need to bring to clinics. Firstly, have a clean horse and tack. Braid his mane, or at least make sure it looks presentable. Dress like you want to be taken seriously. Be honest about your abilities and what level you are riding at. Also make sure that you are really ready for the clinic. If you are experiencing serious behavioral issues, then you and your horse are not really ready for a serious dressage clinic. One rider at the AK clinic spent her entire ride on a ten meter circle just trying to get her balking horse to move. The fourteen year old gelding was clearly a spoiled brat, the rider was clearly a basket case enabler, and Mr. Kottas was clearly angered and frustrated by having to waste his time convincing a rider to actually make her “second level” horse trot a circle. It was unproductive on all fronts and the bad energy was unfortunately carried on to the next rider. Most importantly, be open to learning. Do not make excuses for your mediocrity and/or contradict the clinician at every turn. There are cheaper ways to be belligerent.

GEORGE MORRIS HORSEMASTERSHIP TRAINING SESSIONS

George Morris has been around since the time when dinosaurs walked the earth. He is referred to as “God” by American hunter jumper riders. He’s a stickler for proper turnout and doing things the RIGHT way. He’s won more stuff than I care to list. He was the coach of the US show jumping team for forever. He’s one of only four “Horsemen of Honor” as recognized by the Cadre Noir. He’s one of the few big riders who can absolutely teach. He’s so big that he actually gets to pick who will pay him tons of cash to ride with him.



Anyone who is serious about becoming a great rider needs to watch his week long clinic working with the best young jumper riders in the US. It’s free and on demand at USEFnetwork.com. For those who do not care to watch all ten hours of it, or just want to rehash the highlights, here are some of the biggest things to come from his clinic.

1. Horses need to be ridden with the hand and leg as well as from the seat. Let me emphasize the LEG part of that statement. This means that the horse must go from your leg and stop from your hand. He must let you touch and maneuver him. The best way for the horse to learn obedience to these aids are transitions between the paces, within the paces, and lateral work.
2. Lift your hand when the horse throws his head up to resist the aids. This causes the bit to stay in the corners of the mouth. Do not pull down or pull more when the horse throws his head. Just lift your hand the same amount that the horse has thrown his head and wait for him to give. When all’s well, lower your hand and reduce the rein pressure. (This is from the classical French methodology, by the way.)
3. Half halts from the hand should be upward, not just backward. This encourages the horse to balance himself more uphill. Half-halts must always be released to encourage self-carriage.
4. For iffy jumps, sit down and drive the horse forward. Otherwise, go into a half-seat while jumping to relieve the horse’s back which is a very fragile thing.
5. Learn how to do an automatic release. Effective riders can float the reins.
6. Ride without stirrups as often as possible to improve your seat and balance.
7. Practice jumping combos with tons of technical turns. The difficulty should come from the course pattern, not the height and size of the jumps.
8. Good riders rarely jump finished horses. Jumping is incredibly physically stressful so should be done infrequently. Again, focus on the technical aspects, not the height.
9. Be a good student. Pay attention all the time. If you want a break, get off.
10. Stay mindful of a horse’s fitness and physical well being while riding.
11. Use complex bits properly. For example, gags and pelhams must be used with two reins. One for the snaffle action and one for the harsher action. Using only one rein is both confusing and unfair to the horse.
12. Ride back to front (leg to hand). Too many riders these days ride hand to leg which explains the epidemic of gadget use. George Morris is very anti-draw rein/neck stretcher/tie-downs/etc. Another reason to love the old GM.
13. Be correct and classical in your riding and training. Gadgets are for bad riders.

DEBBIE HILL AND KATIE STOY DOMINATE THE US DRESSAGE FINALS

Debbie Hill and Katie Stoy rocked the inaugural US Dressage Finals. They took home 3 champion titles and 1 reserve champion titles. Congrats to Debbie and Katie, the horses, the owners, the grooms, and anyone else involved!



Debbie Hill's Rides

Horse	Owner	Level	Place
Boccaccio	Marchella Rcihardson	First	Champion
Boccacio	Marchella Richardson	Second	Reserve Champ
Sir Sherlock	Leslie Waterman	Second	4th
San Nero	Jane Hays	Third	4th
Floretienne	Leslie Waterman	Training	Champion
Quantum Jazz	Leslie Waterman	Training	9th

Katie Stoy's Rides

Horse	Owner	Level	Place
Maggio	Ginny Moon	1st Freestyle	Champion



Katie on Maggio with owner Ginny Moon

Debbie on Floretienne with owner Leslie Waterman

USDF ANNOUNCES NEW INSTRUCTOR/ TRAINER PROGRAM FACULTY

Lexington, KY (January 8, 2014) – The United States Dressage Federation (USDF) is pleased to announce that Heidi Chote, CA, Kathryn Fleming-Kuhn, IL, and Katherine Simard, CO, have been appointed as new faculty members for the USDF Instructor/Trainer Program at Training-First Level. Each of these new faculty members is a USDF Certified Instructor through Fourth Level. In addition, Heidi is a USDF Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medalist and USDF “L” Graduate; Kathryn is a USDF Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medalist; and Katherine is a USDF Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medalist, as well as a USDF “L” Graduate with Distinction.

The Instructor/Trainer Program workshops are an opportunity to learn about classical theories of riding, training, teaching and lungeing and are open to anyone. “We are pleased to add these new members to our Instructor/Trainer Workshop Faculty, and we hope that by providing more qualified faculty, our program will continue to grow,” stated both Lilo Fore and Chris Hickey, co-chairs of the Instructor/Trainer Committee.

For more information on scheduling a workshop, visit the USDF website at www.usdf.org or contact the USDF office at instructorcertification@usdf.org.

EDUCATIONAL OUTLETS

In the spirit of education, I want to give you a list of great FREE online resources that can help you progress in your riding and horsemanship.

- TVDCTA Library
- Steffen Peter’s Youtube Channel – <http://www.youtube.com/user/Steffen619>
- Edward Gal Master Class (there are tons of EG clinic videos in English) – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UulAodN4qrE>
- Tamarack Hill Farm (especially for eventers) – <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tamarack-Hill-Farm/109161715946>
- Professional Equine Grooms (lots of basic horsey knowledge) – <https://www.facebook.com/proequinegrooms>
- Dressage Daily – <http://www.dressagedaily.com/>
- EuroDressage – <http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/>
- Evention TV (eventers) – <http://eventiontv.com/>
- The Chronicle of the Horse – <http://www.chronofhorse.com/>
- Practical Horseman – <http://www.equisearch.com/magazines/practical-horseman/online-extras/>
- USDF Youtube Channel – <http://www.youtube.com/user/USDFORG>

RIDING BEGINS AND END WITH THE UPPER BODY

Riding begins and ends for the most in the upper body from the hips to the shoulders. The horse picks up on it so readily because of its simplicity. The straight hip-shoulder line always remains the same whether full seat, half-seat or jumping position with the only changes being: body to the front open door and forward, right shoulder forward into the half-pass left, upper body back half-halt and so on.

This allows for the hands to be free and to ride in looped reins after every little signal. The goal is to ride through the body, without hands and rein weight only. It is just like when having a dog on a leash and going for a walk, run or better yet bike ride. Zero weight on the leash is the only way for it to be pleasant and successful. In riding, it's the same. The beauty of it is that it takes all the mystery out of the exercises.

The focus needs to be from the hips to the shoulders and keeping a straight line whether positioning that part of the body to the front of the vertical or on the vertical or behind the vertical depending on the forward, the quiet, and the bringing back of the horse.

In order to develop upper body riding, the rider must release the legs and hands fully and use them only when necessary and then release them again. It is through the release that the body will become as it should and play its role of riding in the most subtle way. The end result will be light and harmonious riding and the horse moving freely as if without the rider.

~Hector Carmona

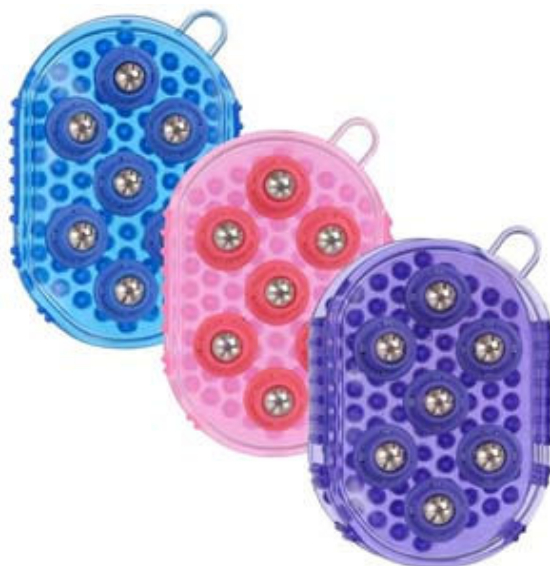
PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

What: Tough-1 Rubber Jelly Massage Mitt

Where: <http://www.statelinetack.com/item/tough-1-rubber-jelly-massage-mitt/E007206/>

How Much: \$5.19

Why: I love this mitt! It has a soft curry comb on one side and a massager on the other. The curry comb side is perfect for faces and legs. The massager side contains rolling magnetic balls that feel incredible (I kinda want one for my personal use....). I particularly like to use the massager side on my boy's back after rides. Sir Charles loves his, and for the price, it's certainly worth a try.




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