

TVDCTA BITS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

When?	Where?	What?
Jun 21-22	Flint Ridge Farm	Clinic with Bill Fields
Jun 28	Cotton Meadows Farm	Combined Training Schooling Show
Jul 12-13	Flint Ridge Farm	Clinic with Bill Fields
Jul 12-13	Riverdale Farms	Greystone Dressage Show
Aug 2	Steel Prize Stables	Dressage Schooling Show
Aug 2	Steel Prize Stables	SPS Used Tack Sale
Aug 3-4	Steel Prize Stables	Clinic with Debbie Rodriguez
Aug 9-10	Flint Ridge Farm	De-Spooking Clinic with National Mounted Police Service
Aug 16-17	Flint Ridge Farm	Clinic with Bill Fields
Aug 16-17	Riverdale Farms	Greystone Dressage Show
Aug 22-24	Miller Coliseum	Ole South Dressage Show
Sep 6	Mountain Laurel Farm	Combined Training Schooling Show
Sep 6-7	Riverdale Farms	Greystone Dressage Show
Sep 13-14	NE AL Agri Center	Mountain Music Dressage Show
Oct 18	Flint Ridge Farm	Halloween Dressage Schooling Show

*Events in bold are hosted by the TVDCTA. All others are local events that can be audited for free, but are not directly affiliated with the TVDCTA.

**These events are not set in stone. Check back for changes. (Another reason to read the newsletter!)



FROM THE EDITOR

I just finished watching the USDF/USEF Dressage Festival of Champions in Gladstone via USEFNetwork.com. First off, WOW!!!! We have some hot young pairs coming up. Hopefully they'll be the key to revamping our global competitive success.

But of course, while watching this event, my Facebook feed is filled with all of the show jumping winners of today. A \$30,000 purse here, a \$210,000, and so forth. AND THIS IS A NORMAL, WEEKLY THING. And get this, the jumpers make money at typical recognized shows too, not just the big fancy ones like in the dressage world (only money at the CDIs). So after lamenting my cowardice that keeps me from being a hardcore jumper, I started trying to brainstorm why show jumping classes give out money and dressage ones do not. I've come to the conclusion that it all stems from the fact that dressage events have zero spectators and very few sponsors.

We need to fix this dilemma. Not only does it make all of our horsey lives more expensive, it makes dressage less attractive, or even undoable, to lots of younger riders. Eventually we'll all be too old to continue on in this sport and we need some young blood to keep it going.

My solutions (because I know you're just dying to hear about them) are on the next page.

~KLA

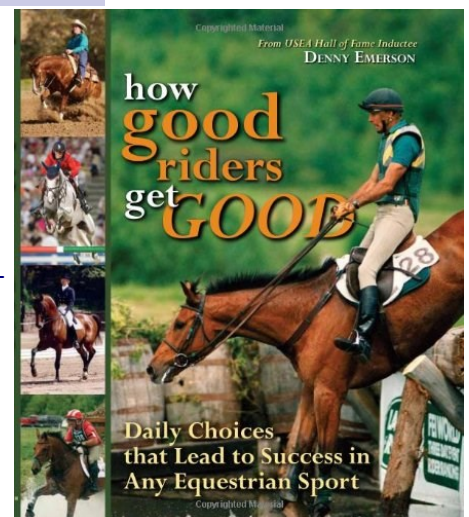
PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

What: *How Good Riders Get Good* by Denny Emerson

Where: Amazon

How Much: \$22

Why: If you want to get good, then take advice from one of the most successful American riders ever. Mr. Emerson discusses everything from fitness, to discipline selection, to how to get sponsorship contracts. But please note that this book is not for the faint of heart. Denny tells it like it is — either work your butt off and make changes, or shut up and stop whining about being average. If you're ready to sell your soul to your sport, then this is a great place to start.



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.

COMMERCIALIZE DRESSAGE!

As I stated earlier, dressage shows are missing two critical components: spectators and big sponsors. I'll tackle the spectators first, because without spectators, there is no motivation for big sponsors to put in big money.

So I did an experiment to see why people don't watch dressage. I made my totally non-horse parents watch the Festival of Champions with me. To be specific, we watched the Grand Prix Special and Grand Prix Freestyle. I discovered the following:

- 1) Apparently dressage is like figure skating. So we should think of it in similar ways when considering spectator perspective.
- 2) The judging isn't spectator friendly. No one could understand how Steffen/Legolas won when they had obvious mistakes (cantering in an extended trot, mistakes in the tempis, etc.). I tried explaining the whole "the rest of his test was better enough...", but they still didn't get it. Maybe mistakes need to be penalized more at the FEI level in order for spectators to "get" the results more. If a skater crashes in figure skating, she won't win, period. So when a horse/rider blow 2 movements, they shouldn't beat out pairs who didn't have any mistakes.
- 3) The modern pop-ish music is better than the old classical stuff.
- 4) Horse/rider teams needs to be color coded, have bigger numbers, or something more identifying so clueless people know who's who. ("Dude, they're all wearing black and riding brown horses.") This would also be a great opportunity to slap sponsorship logo on the riders which results in more financial support for our athletes.
- 5) Give more "cool" info (stuff non-horse people would find funny) on the horses before/after tests.
- 6) It'd be great if before the class, the announcer could give a quickie explanation of what the scores mean (6=satisfactory, and so on). My parents have figured out that a 70%+ ride is quite good, but a typical American is going to think of that as being a C ride at best.

I thought point number 2 was especially meaningful. People like sports such as show jumping, because the winning is completely objective and anyone can get the basic rules in about 10 seconds. No one wants to watch a sport where winning and losing just flat doesn't make any sense.

So after we tackle the whole no-one-wants-to-watch-us problem, we need to go after some big sponsors. And I don't mean cutesy little ones like SmartPak and Dover. I mean BIG ones, like Ford. For some absurd reason, we only get horse companies to sponsor our stuff, and the just don't have the cash to sponsor us in huge ways. If we can get outside spectators, then outside companies would be more inclined to throw money at us. But we have to give up the ridiculous 1800s era tradition that we impose upon our sport. Sponsors need to get more bang for their buck than little patches on saddle pads and a few banners here and there. Let them pay for an event and offer prize money, and then plaster Ford (or whatever company) all over the arena, the stands, the riders, and park trucks all over the grounds (by the way, we could do this in miniature for our own shows...just a thought).

Let's stop being isolationist snobs and commercialize. It'll inject some fresh blood and money into our sport, and making it more accessible to younger riders and people who don't have large incomes or supportive wealthy hubbies.

WHAT'S GOING ON: DRESSAGE CLINIC WITH DEBBIE RODRIGUEZ

What: Dressage Clinic with Debbie Rodriguez

When: Aug 3-4

Where: Steel Prize Stables

Contact: Judith Fiorentino (256-682-1200 or steelprize@knology.net)

Details: Debbie Rodriguez is a USDF Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medalist. She is a USDF "S" judge and a USEA "r" judge. She is also a certified ISSA instructor, and the maker "Success In The Saddle-a Core Fitness Program for Equestrians."



WHAT'S GOING ON: DRESSAGE CLINIC WITH BILL FIELDS

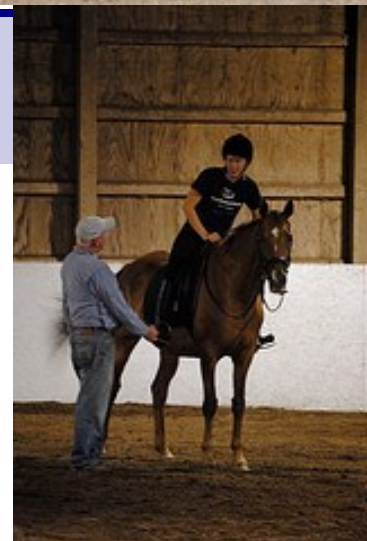
What: Dressage Clinic with Bill Fields

When: Jun 21-22, Jul 12-13, Aug 16-17, Sept 13-14, Oct 11-12

Where: Flint Ridge Farm

Contact: Heidi Rose (fridgefrm@aol.com)

Details: Bill Fields considers himself to be foremost a dressage teacher. He is open to all horses and students, even those not focused solely on dressage.



WHAT'S GOING ON: DE-SPOOKING CLINIC

What: De-Spooking Clinic

When: August 9-10

Where: Flint Ridge Farm

Contact: Heidi Rose (fridgefrm@aol.com)

Details: Come work on building your horse's confidence and decrease spooking with the National Mounted Police Service!



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