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SMDA Newsletter

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2017 SMDA Awards Banquet

Saturday, January 20, 2018
Duffy's Tavern and Grill
168 Saco Ave, Old Orchard Beach, ME 04064

5:30pm – Social Hour
6:00pm – Dinner
7:00pm – Awards

Join us for an evening of socializing and awards!
Festivities will include a buffet dinner and the year-end award ceremony.

We will be raffling off a beaded browband and several horse-themed baskets.
Raffle tickets will be available at the banquet.

RSVP by returning the form below with payment by January 10.

Adults = \$25.00 / Children 12 and under = \$14.00

For more information contact:
Cindy Cox 207-229-2328 or ccox3022@gmail.com

2017 SMDA Awards Banquet

- Adults (\$25.00) # _____ = \$ _____
- Children (\$14.00) # _____ = \$ _____

Names:

Primary Contact Phone: _____

Mail form and check (payable to SMDA) to:
Cindy Cox, 9 Cherryfield Ave., Saco ME 04072

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SMDA News and Updates



SMDA Annual Meeting and Banquet

SMDA's Annual Meeting and Banquet is Saturday evening, January 20, at Duffy's Restaurant in Old Orchard Beach. We hope to have a good turnout. In addition to the presentation of year-end awards and medals, we will discuss the 2018 show season, plans for changes to our show ribbons and year-end awards program, and getting member feedback and input.

We're fortunate to have Sophia Chavonelle lined-up to give a short talk about her experience at the recent USDF Convention. Sophia represented SMDA at the GMO regional meetings, and will tell us about a new proposal for Regional Awards that is in the works.

We have a lot of new members this year, and we hope you'll enjoy an evening out with time to socialize and get to know other members.

The sign-up form is included with this newsletter, and can also be found on our website www.mainedressage.com

New Footing! Update from the Hollis Equestrian Park



The Hollis Equestrian Park is getting a facelift! In November, several loads of stone dust and sand were delivered and spread to refresh the main arena footing. As we all know, dressage riders are particular about having good and safe footing for the horses. And as any barn owner or manager can tell you, maintaining footing is an on-going process. SMDA supported this effort with a \$1000 donation to help pay for the new material.

We're fortunate to have the HEP available for our shows, with its central location, good parking, and yes even the restrooms! It gives us common ground to come together and compete, and the SMDA Board of Directors was pleased to provide this support. The new footing has been spread and will be allowed to settle undisturbed throughout the winter months. We look forward to trotting down centerline in the spring!

SMDA Revises Awards Program

This fall, a committee was charged with gathering information and coming up with a proposal to modify our awards program. The objective was to address members' concerns and promote an awards program that is fair and recognizes all riders and their efforts. It takes a lot of hard work and commitment to complete the show season and qualify for a year-end award, and we want to make sure people are getting the recognition they deserve.

After researching the awards programs at other GMOs and reaching out to the membership for suggestions, the committee presented a proposal to make the following changes:

SMDA Shows

SMDA's shows will have separate divisions, regardless of the number of riders participating in the class. Each class will be awarded ribbons for First Place through Sixth Place for each of the three divisions: Open, AA, and Junior.

Four High Point Ribbons will be awarded: High Point Intro Rider (all ages and divisions), High Point Open Rider, High Point Adult Amateur Rider, and High Point Junior Rider.



Year-End Awards

We've made significant changes to the Year-End Awards program to accommodate the different divisions. Instead of awarding ribbons for each test, the year-end awards will be given to the highest-scoring riders of each division at each level as follows:

- Year-End Awards places 1-6 are given for Junior, Adult Amateur, and Open at each level: Intro, Training, First, Second, Third, Fourth, FEI, Freestyle, Western Dressage, and Test of Choice (if entries warrant).
- High Point Awards are given for Junior, Adult Amateur, Open, Intro JR, and Intro AA for the highest average score (four scores) of the season.

The committee's proposal for the new awards system was approved by SMDA's Board of Directors at our meeting on November 6. It will be effective in the coming (2018) year. We hope it will satisfy members' concerns and be a fair and honest system of recognition.

New Rules! Several years ago, we implemented a rule that prohibited a horse/rider combo from winning the same year-end award twice. The objective was to discourage people from winning the same award year after year when they should be moving up. With the new Year-End Awards system, we are eliminating this prohibition. We recognize that there's a significant increase in difficulty within the levels, and it might take people several years to progress (for example, from Training Level to First). Although we still encourage riders to move up, under the new system a rider can still compete at the same level and apply for a year-end award even if they've won before.

The Secret to Feeling Calm and Focused before Entering the Ring

-Meredith Brisson, LICSW

Feeling calm and focused, especially when entering a pressure situation, is what so many riders consider the “holy grail” of sports psychology work. Meredith Brisson is a rider and sports psychology coach who has developed a solution that targets the key vulnerabilities frequently seen in adult riders.

Meredith began working with riders because she is a rider herself, and has personally experienced the anxiety, self-doubt, and frustration that can take the joy out of riding. She says “I hear from riders all the time who notice that their energy is all used up by the time they go down centerline. They often feel depleted and frazzled, anxious and on edge and are looking for help.” As riders, what we may not realize is that finding focus in high pressure or high anxiety situations is a skill, and focus is a muscle that needs to be worked and strengthened.

We spend so much time working on all aspects of our riding – lessons, equipment, chiropractic, and other treatments for our horse, but often forget to attend to our own psychological needs. How do we gain that mental edge that will allow us to be calm, composed, and focused before heading into the ring? A well thought out mental warm-up that you practice at home before the show is your key to getting in the “performance zone.”

Meredith's Mental Warm-up Plan

Here's a beginning mental warm up plan to start with. You will want to set aside 20 minutes before you get on to get in to your peak performance mindset. Let your trainer and your support team know that this time is sacred and “off limits.”

- 1) Review 2-3 goals you have created specifically for the test you are about to ride. Your goals should focus on specific movements and the building blocks to riding those movements well. They SHOULD NOT have to do with getting a certain score or ribbon for the class.
- 2) Manage your anxiety level in order to bring yourself into an optimum state of energy – feeling mentally sharp and “on,” but not feeling overwhelmed with nerves. You can use a variety of tools such as a calming breathing technique (breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, breathe out through your mouth for 8 seconds – repeat 3 times) and repeating positive intentions for your ride (“Ride forward with enthusiasm”, “Ride every stride”, “Really GO for it!”).
- 3) Finally, visualize your test – preparing for and riding each movement in the test exactly as you intend to in the ring. Think to yourself “What do I need to do to execute this movement to the best of our ability?” and put that into action!

Meredith also recommends you keep a cheat sheet with the routine written on it in your trunk and in the center console of your truck. Have your goals and positive intentions written out ahead of time so you are not using your valuable mental energy coming up with them on show day.

Try using this simple routine, make it your own and do it before every lesson at home – your focus muscle will bulge before you know it!

Visit Meredith's website for more information, including a special offer for a free breakthrough session

www.meredithbrisson.com



Meredith Brisson
Equestrian Sports Psychology Coach



The Judge's Perspective - Attention to Detail by Jane Tremlett

Dressage is a meticulous sport, and paying attention to details can help your performance.

From the judge's perspective, first impressions are very important. What is the first thing the judge notices? As you head down centerline, you want them to see a competitor who is serious about their sport, and has taken the time to be neat and tidy with themselves as well as their horse. You should be prompt and very business-like no matter how nervous you are. Introduce yourself to the scribe with your name, number, possibly the test, and let them know if you are riding out of order.

It's important to know your test. Don't just memorize the pattern! It's important to look at the actual test sheet – not just the scores but really look for what is required for each movement. The test is very specific and asks that the movements be started and completed at certain letters. Make your circles round and know how to get your horse deep into the corner. Most tests have movements that start and H and K plus M and B, and if you can't get into the corner then the whole next movement may be jeopardized. Know where your coefficients are because you really want to nail them. And make sure to show the beginning and end of each movement – for example, don't let your lengthenings fizzle out.

A very accurate ride can beat an extravagant moving horse. Careful attention to these types of details will be noticed by the judge and your scores will improve. And remember to smile! The judge is not out to get you. Go out and have fun, be prepared, and know you can do the movements correctly at home before you go to the show.



Jane Tremlett, L Program Graduate



Where can I learn more?

To do well at this sport, you must understand the rules and requirements. USEF General Rules and Dressage rules are both available online:

<https://www.usef.org/compete/resources-forms/rules-regulations/rulebook>

Member Profile - London Morin

Meet London Morin! A familiar face at most SMDA shows, London is nine-years-old and rides at Dream Acres Equestrian Center, which is owned and operated by her mother, Angie. London has been riding since before she could walk, and entered her first horse show when she was only 18-months-old!

London is excited to be getting her SMDA Bronze Medal this year, showing successfully at Intro and Training Levels. She is also Champion in Intro C and Training 1 with the Maine Horse Association (MHA). She placed 2nd in the Dressage Test portion at Lendon Gray's 2017 Youth Dressage Festival (Intro C) held in Saugerties, NY.

Very exciting news is that London was accepted into the Lendon Gray Emerging Dressage Athlete program. The goal of the program is to find, to help to educate, and to be part of the development of talented youth to become the international riders, teachers, and trainers of the future and/or to become the very best dressage riders they can be. Despite her young age, London is a committed equestrian and rides every day, as many horses as she can at the barn. Congratulations to London and we look forward to watching her grow and progress!



London and Scotty

SMDA Supports NEDA Symposium

SMDA was pleased to support the NEDA 2017 Fall Symposium with Carl Hester, held at Pineland Farms Equestrian Center on October 14-15. This was an incredible event featuring the five-time Olympian veteran. To help fund the Symposium, SMDA placed a half-page ad in the special keepsake program commemorating this special event.

STATE of MAINE
Dressage
ASSOCIATION

SMDA, an independent GMO of USDF, has over 100 local members and places special emphasis on assisting newcomers to the sport of dressage.

SMDA offers:

- An annual USDF recognized dressage show
- Three schooling shows per year
- Numerous affiliated schooling shows per year
- A year-end awards program
- A rider medal program
- An annual scholarship grant of up to \$1000 per application

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President's Corner

Dressage is a personal journey – but ribbons and awards mean a lot! The SMDA awards review committee and Board of Directors worked long and hard at reviewing our current awards system and making recommendations for change. There were a lot of differing opinions, and we know that there is no one system that will make everyone happy. We'll be giving out a lot more First Place awards under the new system, and we hope to increase the level of recognition provided to our members who work so hard to train and show their horses as best as they can. Like any sport, Dressage will never be "fair" in everyone's eyes. There will always be someone with a more expensive, fancy moving horse. Or someone who had the opportunity and finances for a winter in Florida with a professional trainer. Or someone who's younger and stronger and more of a natural athlete. And so on. But at the end of the day when you read through your test comments and listen to your horse quietly munching hay, we hope you'll see the real reward is in your progress (no matter how slow), and it is the improved partnership with your horse that keeps us going.

Susan

