

COLLECTIVE REMARKS



Editor Fran Kehr franwtkl@gmail.com

**THE HDS
DIGITAL NEWSLETTER**

*Best of luck to all
Competitors at the
GAIG & SWDC
Region 9
CHAMPIONSHIPS*

*Send pictures of
Your Successes
For the November
Issue of
Collective Remarks!*

Breaking

News:

THE VOTE IS IN!

NEW HDS BOARD MEMBERS:

Pres: Jody Lynn DeStefanis

Vice Pres: Simone Van Der Schalk

Schooling Show Chair: Dawn Morris

Junior/YR Chair: Cate Schmidt

Sponsorship/Ads: Jane Holman

Awards Chair: Trish Henderson

Historian: Noel Anne Lewandos

Special Events: Ashley Shaw

HDS Board Meeting

Minutes – Monday, September 9, 2024

Present: Angel Gunn, Sarah Denham, Diane Dougherty, Cat Schmidt, Ashley Shaw, Leslie Cummings, Dawn Morris, Jody Destefanis, Noel Lewandos, Fran Kehr

Not present: Jessica Jemison, Patricia Henderson, Flo Edelman

Meeting was focused solely on the Regional Championships.

- Angel reported that Dover is donating an assortment of prizes. Jane will contact Spring Creek Feed to see what they can provide.

- Bag stuffers include logoed screwdriver/flashlight combo, emery board, etc.

Bag stuffing team needed on Monday, September 30

- Set up starts on Monday except for the mega arena.
- Kathy Grisolia arrives on Tuesday. Tents, a-frame boards, light towers will be delivered and constructed on Tuesday morning. Probably 6 rings – one in Main, one in Tellepsen, two in Mega and two of the outside arenas.

We want to encourage people to actually read and keep the programs since we spend a lot on them.

Numbered stickers will be placed in each program. Numbers will be called for door prizes. Looking for other ideas for making sure that people go through the programs.

Great Eight Grape Cape(r) – Bottle of wine to any amateur getting an 8 in collective remarks (except in gaits). (Anybody got a better rhyme scheme?)

- Thursday function – wine and cheese for educational discussion by Arlene Gaitan on what attire (horse and rider) is acceptable in the show ring.
- We will order trays from HEB rather than hire a caterer. Jane will find a bartender to serve. We want to do a “fashion show” but Cate is fearful that Juniors will be too busy to participate.
- Canter Culture will provide some breeches. Working on other options.

Friday function – “Mama Mia” themed party to **celebrate Julia Peacock’s upcoming wedding**. Susan Peacock is responsible for planning and ordering catering. We will find a bartender unless her caterer provides one.

Saturday banquet – Ashley is ordering catering.

- Jane will do a dessert table with logoed desserts for Black Star as the presenting sponsor of the open show.
- Caterer will provide bartenders.
- Regional awards will be presented by Bess and her team.
- Following the announcement of the awards, we will have the “Anything Goes” Freestyle exhibition in Tellepsen. I anticipate chaos. Exhibitions will include spousal lead line classes with the potential for a lead line quadrille (my personal dream of 4 or 5 terrified husbands doing patterns)
 - Because people always say they don’t know about our party events, we will print flyers to distribute in bags and throughout the stables notifying of functions on each of three nights.

Meeting adjourned around 8:30 p.m.



THE

DRESSAGE FOUNDATION

Building U.S. Dressage Through Your Generosity

As we proudly celebrate The Dressage Foundation's 35th anniversary this year, we are filled with immense gratitude for our incredible donors! Their generosity has a profound impact, empowering riders to learn, grow, and achieve their dreams.

Sarah, a grant recipient from Texas, is one of the riders who has been helped by TDF donors.



Sarah has loved dressage since childhood, and as a young rider, she spent time as a working student and trained with top instructors to build a solid foundation. Now as a professional instructor/trainer, Sarah has worked for years to build her teaching and training program.

A key to Sarah's success is her commitment to education. She shared,

"Continuing my education as a dressage professional is important because there is always more to learn and ways to grow. Each horse I sit on has individual nuances, and every student I teach also has unique capabilities. Receiving regular coaching is an important part of staying curious and engaged in the process of development."

Sarah knows that focusing on her own education, and encouraging her students to do the same, provides long-lasting benefits.

"I really value the time I spend watching my clients take lessons with other instructors. I learn alternative phrasing, specific exercises, and see things in their position or approaches to an exercise that I had missed or not spent enough time on. Anyone who wants to be their best in this discipline needs to keep growth at the forefront of their program."



This focus on education by Sarah and her students is reaping great rewards in their home arenas and in the show ring. Sarah's students are competent and successful because of the good training they receive. And that story is happening across the United States, in every area where TDF awards grants for instructors to continue their education.

Every rider needs a good instructor, and those instructors need to be available in all corners of our country.

Your donation will help TDF award grants to more instructors like Sarah, whose education benefits not only her, but the students she

teaches and the horses she trains.

Please consider a gift today! [Secure online donations can be made here.](#)

Thank you for considering a donation to TDF!

Gratefully,
Jenny Johnson
Executive Director

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Celebrating 35 Years

For over three decades, TDF has been dedicated to fostering growth, education, and excellence within the dressage community. We want to hear your stories of TDF's impact on your life!

Share Your Stories

•

[What are Your Dressage Dreams?](#)

The Dressage Sports Horse Qualifier I, II, III and the 2024 Pro-Elite/USDF Southern Series Final Hosted by Haras Dos Cavaleiros on Aug 30 th - Sept 1 st, 2024

To see all the results click on this link <https://www.foxvillage.com/show?id=10982>



Eurythmic WS owned by Simone van der Schalk
2024 Pro-Elite/USDF 3 YO Materiale Champion



Wrebrandt WS owned by Nicole Rothell
2024 Pro-Elite/USDF Colt/Gelding Champion



Lord Louie SDSF owned by Carrie Leach
2024 Pro-Elite/USDF Colt/Gelding Reserve Champion



Galileo WS owned by Carrie Leach
2024 Pro-Elite/USDF Colt/Gelding 3rd place

USDF DSHB Southern Series Finals



Eurythmic WS

Owned by Simone van der Schalk

Shown by Erika-West Danque

Bred by Jan and Gary Marquardt

**Materiale 3 yr old
Grand Champion
Haras Hacienda**



5 TAKEAWAYS FROM THE PARALYMPICS

REPRINTED FROM CHRONICAL OF THE HORSE

PUBLISHED September 10, 2024

WORDS BY

- [Blogger Lauren Sprieser](#)

Man, oh man, what a triumph it was for us at the Paris Paralympics! We all knew it was going to be an exciting Games for USA Para Dressage, but it ain't over 'til it's over. And Becca Hart, Fiona Howard, Roxie Trunnell and Kate Shoemaker came, saw and conquered, and took home a mountain of medals for equestrian sports in Paris.

I love it when our country succeeds in sport, but I was particularly invested in these Games, as Becca Hart is one of my closest friends, and I sat in my office, bawling my eyes out, watching her conquer Grade III. I made time to watch all the Americans, and as my timing was imperfect, I also ended up seeing a fair bit of the rest of the competition as well. And I made a few notes on things we can learn, as high-performance riders and as able-bodied riders writ large, from their monumental triumph, and from para sport in general.



Blogger Lauren Sprieser was in tears watching her friend Rebecca Hart (pictured) win three gold medals at the 2024 Paris Paralympics. But beyond the pride, she writes, she noted plenty of lessons to learn from watching the Games. Devyn Trethewey/USEF Photo

1. A horse is only as sensitive to the aids as you train it to be. Please do yourself a favor and find a way to watch Rihards Snikus of Latvia, the individual gold medal winner from Grade I. He has cerebral palsy, and he moves a LOT. And his horse, the appropriately named King Of The Dance, is so beautifully trained that he ignores a lot of those excess movements. He understands what to pay attention to, and what not to. He blocks out the inadvertent noise that Rihards' body makes. (NBC has the Paralympic video coverage under lock and key, but if you want to see him in action, check out his [gold-medal performance](#) from the 2022 ECCO World Championships in Denmark.)

I take from this that our horses, too, can learn to ignore us, unless we tell them otherwise by being consequential with our aids. Rihards' body makes noise he can't control. Your leg, Jane the Jockey, that you use to spur your horse every step, because you're just being sloppy? What's your excuse?

2. Halts are expensive, and easy to practice. So is the walk, and so are transitions within the walk. I'm writing this on a gorgeous, crisp fall day in Virginia, but it was *horrible* this summer, beastly hot with terrible humidity. You know what we spent a lot of time on, my horses and I? Halts. Collected walk. Walk pirouettes. Extended walk. And all of the transitions in between.

Of course these are much more critical movements in para-dressage, where they comprise much, if not all, of the lower grades' tests, versus the Grand Prix, where they are only a handful of the 31 test movements. But why get 6s there when you could get 7s, or 8s? Yes, quality of walk is about your horse's natural gaits, but transitions, walk pirouettes, and halts? Anyone, on any horse, can be taught to do those brilliantly.

3. We don't need our reins as much as we think we do. Many para riders have impaired ability in one or both arms. When a rider has an arm that does its own thing, they sometimes get a dispensation to basically strap it to their chest so it can't get in the way, and the rider then uses their "good" arm to hold the reins. Sometimes it's two reins. Sometimes it's four reins. All in one hand. So, again, able-bodied Jane the Jockey, why doesn't your horse half-halt from your seat? Why do you need to pull on your reins? Watch riders do this at the Paralympic Games, and let it be inspiration for you to work harder at home until you can do it, too.

4. There's no silver-bullet answer to why the U.S. Para Dressage Team was so exquisitely successful in Paris, and also came home with hardware at the last world games and Paralympics, but it's noteworthy that the timing of their meteoric rise in competitive success is aligned with the tenure of the current para team coach, Michele Assouline. In able-bodied dressage land, the land with which I'm most familiar, our best years in recent memory were also years in which we were led by a highly qualified and experienced team coach, with a long enough tenure to make their mark. As of late it's felt like we're a ship without a rudder, and I know this has been felt in other disciplines as well. Is it the only thing? No, of course not. Luck, timing, caliber of horse, sponsorship, and a million factors contribute. But it would be foolish not to recognize the connection.

5. Horses are incredible. Let us not for one second make the mistake of thinking that competitive para horses are old plodders; they are athletes. They go. They are overwhelmingly, at the top level, warmblood horses, with all that comes with the warmblood mind (with all of the love in the world for the warmblood, "dumb jock" fits most), and they're fit and big moving. And then, at the Paralympics, they are piloted with grace and elegance by people with physical disabilities, in an arena surrounded by potential predators, with big ol' horsey smiles on their faces. Able-bodied or para athlete, green to Grand Prix: None of us can ever take these amazing animals, and all they let us do with them, for granted.

[Lauren Sprieser](#) is a USDF gold, silver and bronze medalist with distinction making horses and riders to FEI from her farm in Marshall, Virginia. She's currently developing The Elvis Syndicate's C. Cadeau, Clearwater Farm Partners' Tjornelys Solution, as well as her own string of young horses, with hopes of one day representing the United States in team competition. Follow her on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and read her book on horse syndication, "[Strength In Numbers](#)."

WINDY KNOLL FARM FALL DRESSAGE SCHOOLING SHOW

Finally, after two shows that had to be postponed because of weather, (the WKF Winter and Spring shows), we finally got a break in the weather to actually have a show on the date it was assigned! Lovely weather was a bonus.

A very full day of 55 rides, there were traditional USDF dressage tests (Intro thru PSG) in addition to Western Dressage (Intro thru 4th level), and also combine training dressage tests!

Below are our Champion Saddle Pad winners.....JR, AA, & OPEN
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- Magnolia contact Fran Kehr, Windy Knoll Farm www.windyknolldressage.com or franwkf@gmail.com

Tack for Sale:

- Dressage Saddles for Sale....Marschall Special II medium tree 17.5" seat \$650; Crosby medium tree 17.5" seat \$650 Schleese wide tree 18" seat \$1200. Contact Sandy Venneman vennemansandy@gmail.com
- Pixem Robotic Camera, complete system, like new \$800 contact Catherine Hall cmh@satx.rr.com 830-743-7905

Misc. Items:

- Konig Dress boots. Size 8. Zipper in the back, good condition. Originally \$1200, asking \$400. Contact Fran, franwkf@gmail.com; 713-703-9433
- Apple 12’ Retina MacBook. Excellent condition 8GB memory. Asking \$350. Contact Fran, franwkf@gmail.com; 713-703-9433

USDF Annual Convention in Houston Dec 4-7

The 2024 Adequan®/USDF Annual Convention is coming to Region 9 - Houston, Texas, from December 4 – 7, and will be held at the beautiful JW Marriot Houston by The Galleria. [Full information here](#)

Region 9 is very excited about this event. Besides camaraderie and meetings, there are many education sessions offered, networking abounds, and a couple parties for attendees to enjoy!

The Board of Governors is where delegates vote on changes. Delegates are sent by each region, and each GMO from across the USA.

The Saturday night Salute Gala and Annual Awards Banquet is a festive celebration of member accomplishments.

Houston is a diverse city. A few highlights - things to see/do:

NASA & Space City; Houston Museum of Natural History; Houston Zoo; Downtown Aquarium; Museum of Fine Arts; Hermann Park; GDH Water Wall Park; Minute Maid Park & the Houston Astros; Kemah Boardwalk; Cockrell Butterfly Center, or a foodie tour of some of the best restaurants around.

Sponsorship for the Adequan®/USDF Annual Convention in Houston is available:

You may sponsor or help sponsor:

Coffee Breaks

Welcome Reception

Offsite Friday Evening Party . Any amount is appreciated...from \$50 to \$10,000.

It is always a lot of fun...seeing old friends and meeting new ones.



TD Educational Opportunity!!

- Thursday early evening of the Championships at GSWEC, Arlene Gaitlen again is having a lecture concerning USEF rule changes as it applies to equipment. She will also discuss the new "throatlatch" rule effective 9/1.
- Basically all bridles, **except the Micklem**, will require a throatlatch. Examples include the Tota Comfort System and PS of Sweden Pioneer. In Annex A, the PS of Sweden Nirak does not require a throat latch, but we anticipate when the FEI updates the tack app (after the Paralympics), it will also require a throat latch and then USEF will follow suit.

Manufacturers are now selling throat latches. Throat latches may be stitched or attached to the crownpiece or browband with a ring, snap, or buckle.

Rule changes can be found clicking this link.... just look for the items in RED.

<https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/F3p8pgrWgAo/dr-dressage-division>

Volunteers Still Needed! At the Region 9 Champs

If you volunteer... you get a cool T-Shirt, lunch tickets, and starbucks cards.

Please email Jody Destefanis

FEI ANNOUNCES SPECIAL MEETING TO TACKLE ‘CRITICAL JUNCTURE’ FOR SPORT

PUBLISHED

- **September 3, 2024**
- **WORDS BY.** [Melissa Wright](#)

Those “challenges” largely revolve around allegations of horse abuse lodged against well-known riders and trainers. Allegations against the likes of Olympians [Dujardin](#) and [Helgstrand](#) have made international news, damaging public perception of the sport.

The FEI and other sport stakeholders, including national organizations like the U.S. Equestrian Federation and U.S. Hunter Jumper Association, in recent years have recognized the importance of [social license to operate](#) in ensuring the long-term future of competitive horse sports.

“Many may not fully realize the scrutiny facing equestrian sport in general,” an FEI spokeswoman wrote in an email. “The fundamental nature of our activity is being questioned, with some individuals raising concerns about the necessity of riding horses. We are at a critical juncture, as there is significant opposition to our sport that some may not fully appreciate.”

Horse welfare is the focus of FEI initiatives like the 2022 establishment of its Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission, its Equine Welfare Strategy Action Plan and campaigns, including “[Be a Guardian](#),” launched during the Paris Olympics to reframe the way in which riders see their role in ensuring the happiness and well-being of the animals in their care. The Oct. 1 meeting the FEI announced this week is another step in that process.

“Dressage has faced scrutiny for some time, following a number of alleged horse abuse cases which have damaged the public perception of the sport,” the spokeswoman wrote. “The challenges facing dressage are complex, so our goal is to first have an open conversation, without a fixed agenda, allowing us to collectively identify the key problems and start exploring potential solutions.”

The October meeting will bring together a small group of athletes, officials, veterinarians and other representatives from major equestrian stakeholder groups “with the expertise needed to help us address critical issues affecting the dressage discipline,” she said. “To foster open and candid discussions, we are keeping this group small and private. We will share the key outcomes with the broader community as soon as possible after the meeting.”

USEF chief marketing and content officer Vicki Lowell said USEF will not have a delegate at the meeting, “however, we are supportive of the FEI starting the process with a small group of stakeholders and are confident that USEF will have an opportunity to provide input following preliminary discussions.”

One topic on the agenda for the October meeting will be an update on research and development initiatives at the FEI, including an ongoing “oral cavity study” of horses’ mouths. The study began with a literature review and is now in its second phase, which involves interviewing riders and veterinarians. The literature and interviews will be used to help draft protocols that can then be evaluated for implementation.

“The purpose of the oral cavity study is to develop a protocol for veterinarians that monitors the horses’ oral health to determine their fitness-to-compete at FEI competitions,” the FEI spokeswoman wrote. “While the study will look at factors such as bit usage, it will also consider ways of implementing the protocol effectively in all disciplines. The protocol aims to include advisory recommendations on individual horses, while collecting data for regulatory and educational purposes.”

De Vos, in announcing the meeting, emphasized the FEI’s commitment to prioritizing welfare.

“While the FEI is committed to seeking collective solutions and fostering consensus wherever possible, the safety and well-being of our horses remain our top priority,” he said. “Our ultimate goal is to ensure that dressage is a discipline where the sport is conducted in a manner that focuses on the horse’s comfort.

“As the governing body, the FEI is prepared to take the necessary decisions to ensure that we are living up to our promise to ‘Be a Guardian’ for our equine partners, and to improve the standards of safety and care in our sport. We have shown in recent months that the FEI is ready to step in and take decisive action when the need arises.

“As the sport evolves, we must adapt and find effective solutions to current challenges. Our success depends on the community’s willingness to approach these issues with an open mind and work together toward common ground.”

FEATURED BARN:

TEXOVER

Tex-Over Farms is a beautiful “park-like” equestrian center located in Conroe, TX.

Founded in 1985 by Paul Kathen, Tex-Over has served as a premier training facility in the



John Mason aboard Savannah SWF

Houston area for nearly 40 years. With an emphasis on correct, german-based, training principles, Tex-Over has had continued success in the show ring on a local, regional, and national level for many years. Tex-Over has over fifty 12’x12’ stalls, two covered arenas, an outdoor dressage arena, and over 20 acres of trails to enjoy. And while Paul Kathen continues to train students, John Mason has been the head dressage trainer for the past eleven years. John and Paul are both certified trainers/instructors by the German Riding Federation (FN), and both have trained numerous horses and riders up the levels.

Both Paul and John are recipients of the Region 9 Teaching Excellence Award.

Associate trainer Rheanna Caron has ridden at Tex-Over since she while attending Texas A & M, our beginner lesson instructor and resident eventer.



Rheanna showing off jumping skills



Paul Katheren, owner and founder of Texover Farm aboard Merino

Tex-Over Farms promotes a relaxed but education focused atmosphere for their horses, students, and boarders to thrive in.

Contact us at 936-273-2416 or tex-over@consolidated.net



Arnulfo, grooming for John Mason holding Splendido, with owner Victoria Reeder and puppy, Jack

LET THE “YEAHBUTS” LIVE IN THE FOREST

Reprinted from The Chronicle of the Horse
August 2022

WORDS BY
[Blogger Lauren Sprieser](#)

Every teacher of riding lessons has A Thing that makes them nutsy. Maybe it's people who want to fly up the levels and do tricks without a solid foundation. Maybe it's students who talk all the time and don't listen as well. Maybe it's students who make the same mistake over and over again. For me, the thing is students who talk back, who tell me why the thing I'm suggesting to them won't work, or why they can't try it.

I presume that, when someone rides with me, whether it's in a lesson, a clinic or in training at my home facility, they've chosen to do so because they value my professional opinion. They've done their homework on checking my resume, to make sure that I'm credentialed enough to know what I'm talking about; they've either listened to me teach before, or their regular coach has assured them that riding with me would be a good fit. And since they believe that I'm qualified to tell them what to do, they're willing to give me their money in order to be told what to do.

That's the ballgame: They're willing to experiment with my way of doing things, at least once; if



they don't like it, I assume they know they can take or leave my advice, but they're willing to, for that 45 minutes, give it a shot. So when someone comes to me and gives me the “yeah, but”, I'm always confused.

“Yeah, but,” they say. But my horse was diagnosed with a soundness problem that may—or, more likely, may not—be relevant. But I read on the internet that if my horse goes behind the

vertical, the world explodes. But when I do that, the horse becomes imperfect in some other way. But that's not what (insert famous, or infamous, person) says. But I think that piece of equipment is cruel. But I'm afraid/tired/sore.

I find these things unbelievably annoying. And for those who knew me as a teenaged equestrian, I'd like to officially apologize to anyone I rode with, because in the interest of full disclosure, I'm sure that I did this—and more—from time to time. (I call Lendon Gray about once a year to apologize to her for having to tolerate an 18-year-old me.) Certainly when I teach kids, I have to remind myself from time to time that, hey, they're kids. They haven't yet mastered how to learn. Just like young horses, sometimes they do dumb things, say dumb things, get frustrated, have too much ego.

With adults, however, I'm just so much less sympathetic. Adults know how to learn. Adults know how to regulate their own temperaments. Adults, equestrians and athletes in particular, know that the magic happens at the end of your comfort zone. And yes, adults are sometimes contrarians because they're afraid. I have great respect for fear, I do. But I also think that the time and the place to push your comfort bubble is in the safety of a lesson, with supervision. Because how many of us are brave enough to poke that comfort bubble at home, alone? Yes, sometimes clinicians or instructors are wrong. Yes, sometimes you do know your horse better than the clinician. Sometimes we do need to know that they are just coming back into work, or need more frequent walk breaks, or that they know the saddle is quirky, or that the horse is seeing the vet to likely get his hocks done next week. But man oh man, it's pretty hard to ruin your horse asking a bit too much, one time. A good trainer will identify whether that was the wrong answer, back you up, reinstall confidence, and try a different approach. Trainers are humans, for sure, and all humans are capable of mistakes. But horses are resilient. They just won't come unglued from one funky lesson or from one poor idea. I don't know when it became uncouth to trust your experts, because this is not a phenomenon unique to the horse world, but here we are. I expect it from the internet, where everyone is hidden behind the safety of a screen, but to tell me—face to face, in public—why I'm wrong, or why my expectations of the rider in front of me can't be met—it's my Crazy Thing.

So when I have student who gives me the “yeah, but,” I think back to my high school driver's ed class. My teacher used to say that “Yeahbuts,” rhyming loosely with “rabbits,” live in the forest. Please send them back there. Please be willing, in a lesson, to give it a shot, whatever “it” is: going more forward, or putting your leg on even if the horse feels nervous, or giving both reins even if you think it's going to cause the horse to accelerate/fall on the forehand/come off the bit/whatever. The magic begins just outside your comfort zone, and you've worked too hard to let the Yeahbuts trip you up.

Lauren Sprieser is a USDF gold, silver and bronze medalist making horses and riders to FEI from her farm in Marshall, Virginia. She's currently developing The Elvis Syndicate's Guernsey Elvis and her own string of young horses with hopes of one day representing the United States in team competition. Follow her on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).