

Reports from Salt Lake 2018.

Peter R

Recollections of the 2018 USDF Annual Convention:

I. Membership Committee and Communications Open Forum

a. This was a combined meeting and was designed in the Forum format rather than the “Committee” one. It started with the Membership Chair discussing the Membership Committee, in particular, that it was not tasked with working on increasing the membership of the USDF or the GMOs. Instead, its focus is on obtaining information which can be used by the Marketing Dept. of the USDF and GMOs to enhance their respective goals. Towards this end, the USDF had done a membership survey apparently focused on what type of shows membership attended. Perhaps not surprisingly, the results showed that some people only attended schooling shows but a significantly greater percentage reported they attended both schooling shows and USEF/USDF recognized ones. However, since the questions and the results weren’t provided, it is hard to say exactly what that means (editorial comment!).

b. The Communications portion of the Forum had comments from Jennifer Bryant, editor of Connections, and Ross Creach, USDF Marketing Dept. The big news was that Connections will, as of May 1, 2019, go to a bi-monthly production schedule – to 6 issues a year down from 10. This is due to the steady increase in costs AND the steady demand by advertisers for more multi-platform, multi-media, advertising avenues. With the secession of print publication by Dressage Today, Connections will become the ONLY print magazine devoted to Dressage. Ross Creach discussed a new multi-media platform from the USDF – YourDressage.ORG – which will be live as of 4/1/2019. The concept is to have YourDressage.ORG be an open portal to the Dressage world – open to any and everyone. This portal will have articles, videos, etc. discussing Dressage and should assist Connections with the advertisers demand for a multi-media association. As it will be open to everyone, it is assumed the articles will be less technical and more accessible “to the masses.” This is something we should be promoting to our non-members rider friends to get them more interested in dressage (yet another editorial comment).

II. USEF/USDF Open Forum

There were two basic issues discussed during the time I was able to attend the forum:

a. The Safe Sport Initiative – As of now, in order to compete at a USEF/USDF recognized show, EVERY competitor, owner and/or trainer must have completed the Safe Sport training offered through USEF. This training, done online, should take between 1-2 hours. It will have to be renewed every year but the renewal should take significantly less time. There was a lot of discussion about how this was going to be policed and what will

happen if a person hasn't taken the training – training which must be completed within 30 days of obtaining your USEF membership AND which must be completed BEFORE competing IF you want your scores to count. (There was a suggestion that show management could/should have a computer available so that competitors who have not complied could do the "training" on the spot!) It was emphasized that EVERY USEF "Competing" member, 18 or older, MUST take the training prior to going down the centerline. The key was that IF one is a "Competing" member, the training is necessary thus parents of juniors, for example, don't need to take the training UNLESS they are also "Competing" members.

b. As expected, there was also significant discussion of the Extraordinary Rule Change regarding the revision of the Freestyle qualifying score level. The USEF Legal Counsel explained the process (one that is overly complicated perhaps) which just reinforced the notion that the opinions of the general membership were not considered nor was there an opportunity for general membership comment. There was some (more) discussion of the merits of the change but those comments apparently were just reiterations of comments made at the Freestyle Committee Open Forum.

III. Bylaws Committee

There were several proposed Bylaws the Committee presented to the Board of Governors but these had all been discussed at some length during the year (and all were passed by the Board of Governors with very minimal change). (The proposed Bylaws were all published on the USDF website and are still available for review.) As we had very little to discuss, we ended up discussing the relationship between the Executive Board and the Board of Governors. In particular, the discussion revolved around two things:

a. What sanctions exist when the Executive Board fails to follow its Policies and Procedures (specifically the lack of compliance with the Transparency Procedures and the publishing of Board minutes in a timely manner); and

b. What actions should/must the Executive Board refer to the Board of Governors? This was, of course, in direct response to the E.B.'s decision to request the Freestyle score change without specifically requesting consideration by the Board of Governors. These topics were discussed but with not even any attempt at determining any answers – just questions.

IV. US Dressage Finals Open Forum

This was a review of the Finals and an update on them. While I had hoped to attend the Finals this year, perhaps, given the weather, I'm glad I didn't as it evidently was quite cold and some riders withdrew rather than show in the outdoor arenas. The issue of adding Jr/YR classes was discussed and is being considered by the Finals Committee. At some point there may be a decision. The Committee announced that the contracts for the Manager and Secretary had been extended for two more years and that the Finals would be in Lexington for at least two more years. At the same time, there was over \$35,000 in travel grants made and it is expected that more grants would be given in the coming years. At this time, the

total is limited to \$50,000 but that is also expected to be increased.

V. Board of Governors Meeting

- a. Budget – the Budget, published on the website, was approved as proposed. This includes a \$4/member dues increase for GMOs as of 12/1/2019, the first increase in 10 years.
- b. Officers – the new President is Lisa Gorretta and the new Treasurer is [] – both ran unopposed.
- c. Carolynn Bunch had been nominated for a second term for Region 6 director and Peter Rothschild was nominated from the floor by Karen Cheeke, Oregon Dressage Society President. Peter Rothschild was elected to be the Regional Director beginning Jan. 1, 2019.
- d. Stephanie Bonney, GM Delegate from Idaho Dressage and Eventing Association (IDEA) proposed a motion to direct the Executive Board to request the USEF rescind the new Freestyle Rule through the USEF’s “extraordinary rule change” authority on the ground that the rule “disadvantaged” the USDF membership. This motion resulted in significant discussion with most speakers agreeing the PROCESS used for the new rule was flawed. However, there was a significant split among the Delegates on the merits of the rule. Once discussion was over, there was a roll call vote and the motion passed by a 2-to-1 margin. NOTE, this does NOT mean the rule is, or will be, rescinded – just that the USDF will formally request it be done by the USEF. As of yesterday (Dec. 1, 2018) the rule that in order to ride a Freestyle, you must have a score of at least 63% at the highest test of the level, or a test of a higher level, in order to ride a Freestyle IS the rule.

But the Membership was heard by the Executive Board that there needs to be notice and transparency when such things are proposed.

V. Rider and Horse of the Year Awards

Region 6 was well represented at the Awards Banquet with people getting their Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals; Bronze, Silver and Gold Freestyle Bars; various Horse of the Year Awards and Breed Awards. (Editorial comment – I hope to be able to get a list of ALL of the Region 6 award recipients and have them published.)

Kari M

~The new USEF Safe Sport requirement is for ALL members 18 and over, including horse owners. It is to be completed by existing members by Jan 1, 2019. For new members, it is to be completed within 30 days of joining. If you do not comply, you will not be able to compete, or horses you own will not be able to compete. This requirement is mandated by our US congress. ALL Olympic sport disciplines are having to comply. Once you have completed the

online certification through the link supplied on the USEF website, PRINT OUT your certificate. Many show organizers may require a copy of this along with the other copies of things you send with your entry to enter a show.

~A brand inspection is now REQUIRED to enter Oregon from Washington. Some shows have experienced law enforcement showing up at shows to enforce this. The lax arrangement we have always lived by in the past of not needing this between our state and Oregon is no longer in effect.

~The new USDF tests went into effect Dec. 1 2018. They can be found online at USDF or USEF.

~The great new On the Levels videos demonstrating the new tests, and discussing how they are judged can be found at USDF. A good thing to enjoy on a cold winter day!

~A new Scribe tutorial, as well as a the dressage glossary for all judges, riders, and trainers is now online at USDF.

~There are MANY grants available from The Dressage Foundation covering nearly every situation from getting more riding training, to helping pony clubbers, trainers, judges, show management, etc. Every year, much of the money this organization has to give goes unclaimed due to a lack of applicants. Check out what they have to offer:www.dressagefoundation.org

~The USDF website educational tools, videos, E-Trak, and pod casts have been redone and expanded, and made easier to access for members. There are many wonderful educational opportunities here, being constantly updated. Check it out!

~USDF has \$1000 educational grants available to GMO's wanting to sponsor educational clinics/symposiums without risking financial loss. Much of this money is also going unclaimed. Check out these grants online at USDF. If the idea for the clinic your GMO wants to host is not included, apply anyway as we were told most ideas are accepted.

~The qualifying score for being able to ride a freestyle has now been changed to **63%** at the highest test of the level,(or can be achieved also at any test above that level,) for the level freestyle you wish to ride. (This new rule was much contested at convention, and may change again in the future, but stands for now for the 2019 year.) If you previously qualified to ride on the 2018 score of 60%, you must re-qualify to ride. If you already had a 63% or more, you are qualified.

~For Regional Championships, the Freestyle qualifying score you must have achieved to ride your freestyle is now 65%, achieved twice during the year, with two judges, etc.

Matt E

Judges Forum (Judges, L Program, Freestyles)

-there are new glossary of term for judges that is updated and posted to reflect changes with the new tests. This is on the same page/link as the new tests

-attack is being phased out and moving to the continuing education page

New Tests

-no big changes made to the tests as a whole. Overall goal was to make the tests easier to ride

-all walk work is a coefficient of 2

-Training 3: 1 loop at the trot replaced by a 3 loop serpentine

-First 3: the sequence of walk to trot to canter to 15m circle was broken up so each had a transition at a letter versus picking up the canter and immediately performing the 15m circle
-sequence of the canter work changed to 15m circle, 1 loop serpentine, then the lengthening
-leg yield sequence changes

Second 1: simple changes taken out. Now collected canter to a collected trot transition to a medium walk transition

Second 2: walk tour moved to after all of the trot tour

Third Level: all changes are now a coefficient of 2

Fourth 3: only 1 rein back instead of 2 rein backs. Medium canter on diagonal taken out. Only 3 tempis, no more 4 tempis

L Program

-Just an overview/general update on the program.

-The overall focus of the program is to produce quality judges.

-All judges to move up must have gone thru the L program regardless of the current card (for any judges who began before the L program began)

Freestyle Section

-The test sheets were redesigned to be closer to the FEI freestyle test sheets

-more room for comments

-more clear for additional elements

-errors can now occur

-posting the trot when sitting is required (anything Second Level above)

-failure to salute

-errors are not accumulative. Just -2 for each

-increase in freestyle programs for judge's education

-S Judge designation for the judge at C for freestyle tests in competition

-recommended now. Required for 2020 and at Finals

-63% rule change for qualifying to ride a freestyle

-discussed at committee meetings in 2017 and 2016.

-recommended to USEF in April 2016

-requested to be implemented with the roll out of the new 2019 USEF tests.

-idea was to raise the standards to compete in a freestyle

-a lot of shows use freestyles as the showcase of the show, want to see better technical aspects in the freestyles

-will observe affects of the rule and if the number of participants is greatly affect, then the rule will be reexamined

Lilo

General Young Horse Principles

- Be honest in the potential dressage career of the horse. Don't over penalize the joyfulness, curiosity and insecurity of the young horse
- focus in the athleticism, basic places, general impression and confirmation
- harmony needs to be shown

Judging Questions

- does the performance correspond to a dressage horse
- is the horse on the correct path
- will this horse be able to perform at a high level
- don't want to see fundamental training problems
 - minor training problems not a big deal
 - halts not square
 - inconsistent angles in the shoulder in
 - appropriate to comment on the health and condition of the horse

-Scoring Guidelines

- 9-10 top horse
- 8 good horse
- 7 good horse with a few mistakes
- 6 good horse with bigger mistakes or average horse
- 5 and below average horse with serious problems or barely enough potential

Four Year Old (ideals)

- should be in natural and engagement
- a willingness to go forward, not speed
- a willingness to accept the aids
- a minimum of negative tension (physical and mental)
- uphill tendency and bonus

Five Year Olds

- show a willingness to collect
 - taking additional weight on the hindquarters
- equal bend and suppleness to both sides
 - correct development of straightness

Six Year Olds

- clear ability to collect (for longer periods of time)
- uphill balance more clearly demonstrated
 - Increase suppleness and bending for lateral work and changes
- clear and consistent cadence in the trot and canter

Lisa

- pay attention to the feed, especially during growth spurts
- understand how horses develop
 - look at each as moments in time
 - pay attention to the training scale

- breed for the walk and canter
- listen and be patient
- think about the future
- "The longer it takes, the faster it goes"

Christine

- her big goal is to have beautifully trained horses in the country. Then focus on teams.
- long term picture: develop the next FEI prospect
- short term: each gate is considered, don't be too lenient
- be goal oriented but always be horse friendly
- prepare for competition
 - walk must be elastic (walks like a big cat)
 - trot must have swing and reach
 - canter must have jump
 - horse must develop collection and extensions
 - don't avoid stressful environments but choose carefully

Here are the notes from the footing talk from Heidi Zorn.

Competition Arena vs Training Arena

Horse Show:

- needs to withstand a lot of horse traffic
- be the same for each horse to maintain a level playing field
 - slightly more compacted
 - more grip and firmness
- recover quickly from horrendous weather

Training at Home

- ideal to have different surfaces to work on
- a good base is a must
- type of sand and additive depends on type of riding, how many horses, weather.....

Footfall Phases

- Landing Phase: hoof touches the ground and comes to a stop. Concussion occurs in the bones and joints of the leg, and the ground.
- Loading Phase: entire hoof is in contact with the ground carrying full weight of the horse and rider. Fetlock, flexor tendons and suspensory ligament create shock absorbing effect.
- Pressure under the frog stimulates blood circulation.
- Rollover/Push Off Phase: the heel rotates off the ground, rolling over the toe for push off into the next stride

Surface Characteristics

- Firmness: affects the amount of support and how shock wave forces are distributed during the landing phase. The ideal firmness will support with minimal concussion to bones and joints and soft enough to aid in absorbing shock.
- Cushioning: how the layered dampen shock during the loading phase. Ideal cushioning should distribute shock through the arena layered and provide enough resistance under the hoof for the horse to balance and move into the push off phase.

- Rebound: the resiliency of the surface to return to its original form, returning energy after the weight of the horse is applied.
- Cupping: the surface should cup into the sole and collateral grooves of the frog.
- Grip: the tightness of the surface affects the grip. Grip aids in absorbing shock during the landing phase and provides support and traction during the push off and on turns. The amount of grip depends on how the surface will be used.

Types of Sand

- Gravel
- Sand (course to fine)
- Silt/Clay

Particle Shapes

- Round: creates voids and offers cushioning. Typically unstable and can roll like ball bearings, decreasing stability and traction
- Angular: sharp edges and fit together tightly. Provides stability and traction but can compact and become hard
- Sub angular: have sharp edges worn off. Will nest while still allowing some movement. This lessens compaction and provides traction.

Amanda W

Firstly I want to thank all who voted for me as a PM delegate. It was an exhilarating, educational, and somewhat exhausting experience! We had a good mix of delegates, professionals, amateurs and even a few eventers!

There was some controversy this year in regards to the new freestyle rule requiring 1 qualifying score of 63% at the level you wish to compete (or above) that the USEF (not DF!) passed as an extraordinary rule change and is already in effect. There was much passionate debate on both sides, but I think it is safe to say, the one point most everyone agreed on was HOW it was passed. I think we all felt that it was a bit...extreme. In the end, was voted 2 to 1 to request the USEF rescind said rule. But for now it is in effect.

The other much debated topic is SafeSport. It is here to stay, as it is a CONGRESSIONAL mandate handed down to all the Olympic sport federations. Simply best to complete it, and MAKE sure you print out your certificate at the end, and be prepared to either send it in with your entry, or have it with you as proof when you get to the show. At this point there doesn't seem to be a clearing house for the Show Committee's to go and check who has and hasn't. It is my understanding that some area managers will REQUIRE proof with your entry.

The Dressage Finals will remain on the east coast likely through at least 2022. The good news is there was plenty of unclaimed grant money available to help those of us far flung regions cover some of the cost of travel. And if you make it there and your horse has an issue that causes you to scratch you are still able to claim your grant funds.

It was a whirlwind week ending in the always fun to attend Gala (also known as the Dressage Prom) It is wonderful to see how well we all clean up, (and hard to recognize some of the faces with out a helmet and some hay for decoration!)

Lastly it was a wonderful way to kick off the holiday season, as SLC really pulled out all the stops when decorating. And of course it snowed!!

Thanks again for the privilege of representing Region 6. I hope to do so again soon!

Kathryn L

2018 USDF Convention Notes

1. Membership Committee and Communications Open Meeting

Membership (Paula Langan and Kevin Bradbury):

- A member email survey was sent to all members in 2018, to assess participation in schooling shows, recognized shows, volunteering, and other member participation.
- The survey was developed by the members of the committee in concert with the USDF marketing department. The membership committee's focus is on membership satisfaction. The USDF marketing department is responsible for membership retention and growth.
- Results of survey were shared with USDF marketing and executive board. Survey results can be requested of USDF, and it was suggested that GMOs also receive results to help with their own planning.
- The proposed \$4 increase in GMO member dues was mentioned. Benefits of USDF membership that are specific to GMO members were discussed. The committee noted the new USDF regional schooling show awards program will only be available to GMO members.
- 2019 committee goals include analysis of the member surveys to help identify additional ways to increase member satisfaction.

Marketing and Communications (Ross Creech, USDF marketing manager and Jennifer O'Brien, *USDF Connections* editor):

- Marketing uses various online media to communicate with members, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the website. Instagram is the fastest growing online source used by members. In addition to the USDF main Facebook pages, there also are FB groups for officials, youth, delegates, the L program. There are three websites that USDF supports—USDF.org, USDFscores.com, and the Dressage Nationals website.
- Beginning in May 2019, *USDF Connections* will go to a bi-monthly print edition, so we will receive six issues instead of the current ten. Concurrently, USDF's online YourDressage news will become more robust and will include timely content. The YourDressage site also will be able to host GMO posts.
- *Dressage Today* magazine will no longer exist in 2019 but will be incorporated into the *Practical Horseman* magazine.

2. Adult Programs (Holly Hilliard, chair of committee)

- Updated us on the numerous National Education Initiative (NEI) programs in 2018
- They would like more submissions for GMO grants in 2019, and encouraged us to apply even if we need exceptions in the submissions. They will help us get through the submission process.
- There are also The Dressage Foundation (TDF) grants available, and surprisingly few applications for them. Programs can apply for both NEI and TDF grants combined for educational programs.
- There is a new National Education Calendar on the USDF website, at

<https://www.usdf.org/calendar/programs-events.asp>, that shows all the education programs on one national map.

- Numerous education sources are available online. There are updates to the USDF University Program, with an excellent Education Library and Online Courses.

3. GMO Roundtable Discussions

Security and Safety

- “Safe Sport” training and testing, educating us about creating and keeping safe and respectful sports environments for everyone, particularly young people, is required of all USEF accredited show competitors and show management prior to competitions. The three online sessions take about 90 minutes total.
- Have Emergency Procedures, and make sure board and staff all know them
- One GMO bought two defibrillators and learned how to use them if necessary
- GMOs need to keep members information safe from cybersecurity threats
 - Keep passwords for whole organization in paper, not online

Ideas shared by other GMOs for increasing show participation and membership:

- Schooling show awards and series championships
- Give medals instead of ribbons
- Highly discounted youth classes
- ½ price for second classes/day at schooling shows
- Reach out to 4-H programs, eventers
- Fun costumed freestyles
- Pas de deux or quadrilles
- Incorporate Thoroughbreds (what many young people can afford), award Jockey Club’s Encore Awards

Financial Management

- GMOs should be doing audits or financial reviews, annually or at least every other year, bringing in outside auditors/reviewers
- Keep a paper trail
- There should be at least two eyes on all financial transactions—trust and verify
 - All checks should have to be approved by someone in management or on the board other than the recipient

Other Management Issues

- Need to have more than one board member or volunteer doing each job
 - Have a Board VP designated in case President is incapacitated
 - Should have more than one person overseeing financials, Treasurer plus someone else
- Have written job descriptions for board member and staff roles
- Review Bylaws routinely (they are different from Policies and Procedures)
- Create and keep informational binders for each event to help next person managing it
- Assign board “buddies” to new board members to help onboard them and make them feel comfortable/knowledgeable
- Have board members and staff sign Conflict of Interest forms, stating that they will not enrich themselves through their relationship with the GMO
- Make an inventory of all GMO equipment and assets and know where they are
- W-9s and 1099s for contractors

4. USEF/USDF Open Forum: Trending Topics in Sport and USEF Rule Changes

- See <https://www.usdf.org/competitions/usefrulechanges.asp> and a few highlights below,

- or the full redlined 1209-page USEF Rulebook:
- GR 1303: Safe Sport Requirement: All competing members over the age of 18 must complete Safe Sport Training modules prior to competing. The modules should be completed within 30 days of renewing USEF membership.
 - DR 121: Saddlery and Equipment: A jowl strap is considered a throat latch and can be used to replace, or be used in addition to, a traditional throat latch. In order to meet the requirements of this rule the jowl strap must be fitted around or immediately below the horse's jowl. Nosebands with one or two lower (chin) straps must also have a throat latch, as described above.
 - DR 129: Musical Freestyle: 63% score is now required at highest test of the level or above at which riders want to ride the freestyle
 - In both FEI and USDF Freestyle tests, two points will be deducted for each error, however they are not cumulative and will not result in elimination.
 - Horses cannot compete at more than one licensed show on the same day, and if they are at a licensed show, they may also not compete at a non-licensed show on the same day.
 - Rider tests have been withdrawn from the rulebook
 - All competition managers must complete education requirements prior to the start of competition, including the new SafeSport
 - To compete at 4th Level, a horse must be a minimum of 6 years old
 - Show management must post maps in show offices showing restricted areas, such as where can exercise a horse

5. Competition Open Forum

- Mentioned importance of judge candidates getting experience at shows—they try to do everything they can to not be disruptive to the shows.
- There are new and improved Freestyle score sheets for 2019.
- Sporthorse show participation:
 - Has decreased since last recession, but breeders need recognition
 - Increase number of sporthorse entries—try adding individual breed classes and under saddle classes in addition to the in-hand classes; reach out to breeders
 - Need to separate areas for babies, stallions, from rest of show
 - Find judges who can judge both the regular dressage classes and the sporthorse classes

6. USEF Athlete Forum

Make sure to look at FEI Rulebook changes (redline available at

https://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/FEI_Dressage_Rules_2019_Mark_Up_Version_0.pdf

- A couple of major changes (but many others):
 - Saddlery rules have been completely rewritten
 - Snaffle now allowed at 1-star and 2-star CDIs
- Some shows are choosing to use the FEI Freestyle System ([https://inside.fei.org/system/files/FEI%20Freestyle%20System%20Degree%20of%20Difficulty%20\(DoD\)%20Appliance%20Guidelines.pdf](https://inside.fei.org/system/files/FEI%20Freestyle%20System%20Degree%20of%20Difficulty%20(DoD)%20Appliance%20Guidelines.pdf)) for their GP Freestyle competitions. It is the intention of FEI to use this system at Championships from 2019 on. One element of this will require competitors to upload their GP freestyle floorplans ahead of competition. Competitors set up an individual online account at <http://dressagefreestyle.fei.org>, with login and password.