



Central Plains Dressage Society Newsletter July 2020

Fun Friendly Forward

President's Message/July

We held our first recognized show last weekend! Participants came from Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma. After running working equitation, schooling shows and western dressage shows it was great to round out the competition schedule.

Planning to go to an event is the first step in an experience cycle. Every experience has a continuum leading up to and following an experience. Once all the steps for attending an event have been completed we enter the second phase which is anticipation. This is one of the best parts. During this phase we think about what the experience will be like, who we will see, what the atmosphere will be like. We allow ourselves to imagine the event. For me, I start riding my test and run a range of scenarios and emotions through my brain. I am having many experiences before the actual event!

Being at the event either meets expectations or not. It may be the least important part of the experience cycle. The reality of the experience can bring joy, frustration, sadness, satisfaction, fun, new friends, deeper friendship or happiness. It gives us multiple feelings and emotions while participating. Those feelings are different for everyone and from individual perspectives. The staff, volunteers, parents and fellow competitors are all feeling "stuff".

Finally, we experience recollection or reflection as the event is recalled. This is actually the most powerful part of any experience. It allows us to frame the experience in a way that makes it not only bearable but usually better than it was. It is the reflection that helps us move forward and plan another experience. It is the reflection that is carried in our minds and hearts forever. It is a memory that stays with us.

I want all of our members in Central Plains Dressage to have good memories after events.

They are not just for the riders but are for the families, friends, staff and volunteers that work hard to make positive experiences and good memories. There are still five months of planned events. Start a plan, imagine the experience, have the experience and enjoy great memories.

Chris Cashel

President, CPDS

Recognized Show Schedule

June 27 & 28

Judge: Amy McElroy "S"

TD: Susan Lang

Closing Date: June 19

July 26 (rescheduled from March 29)

Judge: Melissa Creswick "S"

TD: Lisa Rogers

August 22-23 (rescheduled from May 30 & 31)

Judge: Jodi Lees "S"

TD: Bob Cooper

September 5

Judge: Lilo Fore "S"

TD: Bob Cooper

Closing Date: August 29

October 31

Judge Donna Richardson "S"

TD: Bob Cooper

Closing Date: October 23

Schooling Show Schedule

January 11 – Janelle Williams (moved to Jan 12)

February 15 – Deryn Stewart

March 7 – Robin Hessel

May 16-17 – Marie Maloney

May 30 - Gail Matheus "r" - western dressage and

May 30 - Jodi Lees "S" - dressage

June 20 (concurrent with Lite WD show) – Susan Lang

July 11-12 – Lurena Bell

September 12 (concurrent with Lite WD show)

–Marie Maloney

October 24 (schooling show championships)

– Marie Maloney

2020 Region 9 Report

Central Plains Dressage Society

Submitted by: Chris Cashel
July, 2020

Membership:

We are at 150 members which is a little ahead of this time last year.

Activities:

Our goal is to offer affordable, fun and educational activities.

Schooling shows are divided into two areas: East and West.

- Eight west shows, usually in conjunction with Working Equitation or Western Dressage shows. There are 6 Working Equitation, 1 Arab show and 6 Western Dressage (4 are Lite shows)
- Four East schooling shows. Two were cancelled during state closure.
- We had three schooling shows before state shut down in March and started again May 31 with Phases 2 opening in Oklahoma. We operate schooling shows under mandates in state regarding sporting events.

The first recognized show on June 27-28 fulfilled all USEF requirements for participants and staff.

- Five recognized shows. A sixth was cancelled in April.
- Six clinics.

Shows are difficult due to resistance of facemask use and social distancing requirements. There has been regular and constant information provided to members about rules for showing. The recognized shows are almost easier due to USEF rules and having a TD on the grounds.

Finding volunteers has also been challenging because of potential exposure and/or nervousness about being in a new group.

We are cancelling the Summer AGM to minimize face-to-face meetings.

Live streaming averages about 250 views. However, the first recognized show had over 600 views.

To stay in touch with members we utilize a monthly newsletter, Facebook, newsblasts and a website.

Some members participated in virtual scavenger hunts.

The Board has been meeting via Zoom once a month.

Finances:

We currently have about \$2000 in accounts.

Have received some small grants from members who have employers who reward volunteer service.

Amounts to about \$1000.

Moving forward

We will continue with an ambitious schedule of shows and clinics for 2021.

Continue to maintain and improve communication with members.

Fun, Friendly and Forward thinking.

A More Supple Horse

(submitted by Keri Kay)

A soft, supple horse makes any ride more pleasurable. There are several things we can do to help our horses bend easier: training, practice, stretching, and groundwork are vital to create a well-balanced ride. Rolfing Structural Integration bodywork may also help with obtaining suppleness and ease of movement by addressing soft tissue restrictions.

Have you ever worn a long sleeve t-shirt that was too tight, then tried to raise your arms overhead? You're able to do it – but with effort and it's probably not comfortable. Fascia is like a body stocking, a thin sheet of connective tissue just beneath the skin, that covers every muscle, bone, organ and cell in your body. It connects everything in our bodies through a delicate series of tension. Like a spiderweb, any adjustments or distortions in a single strand can be felt in, and affect, the entire web.

As we, and our horses, develop habitual ways of standing and moving and contract our muscles in the same ways over and over, or we have minor injuries that cause us to move differently, then our fascia can get 'bound up'. Fascia is incredibly sticky, like Saran Wrap. And if it gets damaged or loses its viscosity, then **we tend to become stiff, tight, and have limited movement as we get older.** These distortions, over time, can slowly alter our structures, and as a result, our function.

Structure = Function

When our **structure** is altered, it affects how our bodies **function**, or move. Rolfing Structural Integration is about balance in the body. When looking at a tensegrity model, all the pieces are balanced, creating an even distribution of tension throughout the whole structure. When even one piece is out of place, then additional strain is placed on other pieces, to keep the structure from crumpling. If you or your horse have overworked or injured a part of your body, it creates a strain in the fascial layers and the slack in one area will be

absorbed as additional tension in an opposing area, which can create strain or pain. By slowly pulling out all the layers, head to toe, over the course of a few sessions, then the tension in the fascial layer is able to readjust and allow for a better and more comfortable 'fit' – the tension is dispersed; movement, strain and chronic pain are affected. When you and your horse are well balanced, your connection allows locomotion to move through the myofascial kinetic lines (muscular chains) with ease. When either of you have a blockage in your movement, such as tissue adhesions which inhibit transmission through the fascial web, it can decrease suppleness. These blockages can be the result of repetitive strain patterns, injury, or trauma to the tissue. Rolfing SI can identify and remove holding patterns through soft tissue bodywork, to allow better hind end support and front-end extension for your horse and pelvic girdle support for the rider.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY HORSE NEEDS A SESSION?

If your horse is experiencing any of the following symptoms, they may benefit from Rolfing SI: head tossing, difficulty with lateral movements, stiff neck, girthing or "cold back" issues, lack of forward impulsion, refusal to pick up the correct lead.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF IT'S HELPING MY HORSE?

You should be able to feel or see immediate improvement in suppleness and movement, as well as better performance and disposition.

For more information on Rolfing Structural Integration, please visit www.balancedbodywork.com or www.Rolf.org
Keri Kay is a Certified Rolfer™, Licensed Massage Therapist, Certified Equine Structural Integration Practitioner and is currently an Equine Osteopathy student at the Vluggen Institute. She works with individuals who are seeking to improve their posture or find better range of motion through hands-on-bodywork therapy. She works on all equine disciplines, from performance horse to trail horse. She can be reached at (405) 887-9885.

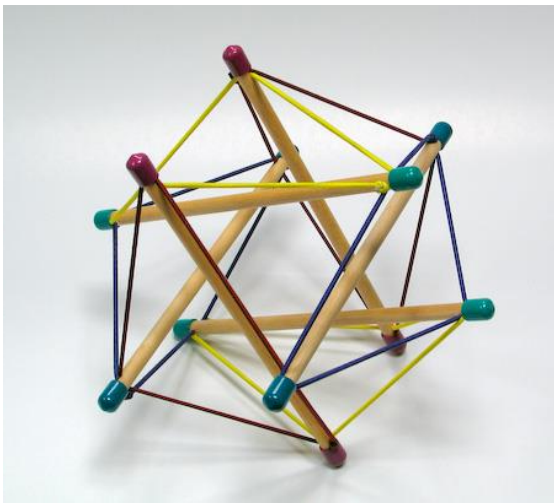
THE HAPPY HORSE

By Rudolf Vlatten

Successful trainers often refer to the importance of the horse's happiness. Riders must remember that the horses' emotions are not influenced by an occasional carrot or by the rider's exuberance after a good ride in the ring.

It is important not to treat a horse as a human friend who will understand periods of separation, silence and excuse our frailties. The horse's happiness depends on the daily routine and the environment. Most important is the balance of demand and reward in the training period. We must be patient, repetition must be measured and reward must be frequent with every sign of progress.

Treated with balanced requests during training sessions and relaxed rides around the property or in the country, the horse will be happy. It will show signs of joy that make a "good ride" brilliant.



If I Only Had One More Week

(submitted by Nancy Eytcheson)

Hello, friends. What a spring we've had! So much nothing for so long, and then all the sudden, boom, one show after another! But I wasn't showing, just volunteering, clinicing, taking three lessons a week, riding six days a week. But I wasn't showing. Not yet. Not ready.

Many of you know my story. I came to Oklahoma five years ago at the beginning stages of first level with my Benny, and last season we got our scores at fourth level, so it was time to seriously think about that dream of a silver medal. That dream that was always "my goal" but never really close enough to worry about. Benny has been my steady eddy, but after 11 years of really only riding one horse, Robin Hessel offered me a lease on her Ambition, that big beautiful FEI horse that she got her silver medal on. "You need to learn to ride something else, get a feel of something different, and Ambition is a school master who can teach you everything you need to know," she said. He's also 17-1 and a huge mover, and luckily for me, he was coming back from some injuries and he was not remotely fit. So in April I took him on, and we could only work 20 minutes at a time, maybe half of that trot. But I rode him nearly every day and the fitness came, and so did a bit of his impatience with this crazy woman who just did not know the rules! His rules! He knows SO much more than I do!!! The crazy woman did not know how to make him trot forward instead of happily doing piaffe, apparently much less work in his mind. She didn't know how to keep his brontosaurus neck low and round, or how to watch his ears to know when he was thinking about spooking at an imaginary dragon. The crazy woman had to beg for walk trot transitions, and when she finally began to canter him after a month of riding, she had no clue what HIS very specific canter transition aides were, which, by the way, are distinctly different from Benny's. Oh my, then there was learning to sit that huge canter, and eventually trying a flying change. Well, that didn't go well, as Ambition likes a solid seat, a tiny little flexion, a whisper from the new inside leg. Not exactly what I have to do with Benny's still evolving changes. So Ambition would buck, go figure. Something had to teach this crazy woman how to ride! And so Ambition has had his new role as schoolmaster cut out for him. Luckily he loves to work, loves carrots, apples and sugar cubes, alfalfa cubes for lunch after he works, and I think he loves me. I sure do love him. But no hurry, no worries about when we were going to actually do something in the show

ring, because there were no shows, no pressure, just daily work, and trying to learn to ride the big boy.

Benny was progressing nicely all spring too, because, yes, I did ride both horses most days, and yes, I am getting pretty dang fit! But no plans to show. Done with fourth level, no interest in revisiting those tests, but boy, we were not ready for Prix St. George. Pieces of it, absolutely, but those tempis..... well, you know. Not ready! Except that on June 20 we found out that a big group of horses entered in the recognized show on June 27-28 were not able to come due to the VS quarantine in Kansas. If the show was going to break even, it was going to be all hands on deck, everybody had to show. Okay, Benny could at least show up and maybe even be respectable, and then Robin said, show Ambition too. Prix St. George. On both horses.

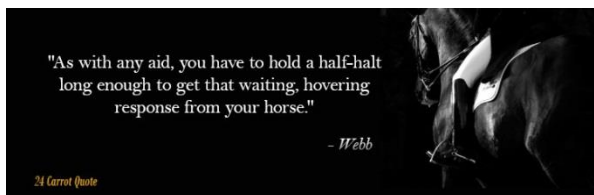
Six days, six, to get prepared, to learn to do the movements of a new, and, by the way, pretty difficult test, FEI for heaven's sake. I didn't have the coat yet that I ordered back in January, I knew I had holes in the movements with Benny, and I had certainly never tried to put them together IN A ROW! And Ambition? No, I had just been doing single changes, a little half pass here and there at trot and canter, but NOTHING from this test! Six days. I took a LOT of lessons in those six days!!!! I learned how to half pass to X, change, half pass to M, change. I learned how to do canter pirouettes, well, sort of. Ambition wants to do them his way (do NOT do a big half halt in the pirouette or he will stop), and Benny is not sure he wants to do them at all. Well, if his mother had a decent half halt that really got him into the pirouette canter first, okay, then he'll do them. Ah, yes, one horse needs huge half halts, the other one wants a whispering half halt. And yes, I do frequently mess that up!!! Keeping the balance in the counter canter corner to the change at C, that is a challenge for me more than the two boys. Benny has a pretty snappy transition from halt to trot at X, but Ambition does not. Maybe one day I'll figure out the buttons to push on him for that. And by the end of the six days, there had been lots of improvement, not much of it solidly confirmed, and still a few missing pieces. Never did practice that canter extension across the diagonal, collect, change, go down center line to halt at X, until we did it Saturday in our tests. Oh well. I didn't fall off, and I thought I looked pretty spiffy in that shadbelly I borrowed from Chris Cashel. Neither one of the boys had the flash and panache required for an FEI horse, but I didn't forget my test, got plenty of 6.5's in both tests, and scores of 55 and 56 in all four tests. Six days. I think it could have

been better if I'd had one more week, but who knows??? Our next show is this month, and maybe by then I will have a better handle on which kind of half halt to use on which horse at which time. Maybe I will learn to count, and the tempis will not be a medley of 2's, 3's, 4's and 5's. Maybe Ambition will be happy with my newly acquired whispering fingers and leg and will show off his big gaits, and I will actually be able to sit that big extended trot. But the weekend of that show I will surely be saying again, If I Only Had One More Week.



Nancy on Ambition 7 (above) and Big Ben Hancock (below)





My Journey With Millie

(submitted by Christina Harmon)

Millie (Millennium Wind) is a 20 year old Arabian mare. I've owned her since she was 2. I feel like we have grown up together and experienced a lot together through the years. She was a young, green horse when she came into my life, and I was a young and green rider. My thought process was that I would find a trainer, work on my skills while Millie was growing up, and we could build a partnership together. I would have a trainer ride and work with her while I learned basics on other, more experienced horses. In theory, it was a good, solid plan. In practice, well...the best laid plans don't always materialize. What I didn't count on, was how hot and sensitive of a horse Millie is, and that caused a lot of tension and anxiety. I was fortunate enough to work with good people along the way to help us get to where we are now, but it took a lot of time and dedication to get there.

The years went by, and after several changes and course corrections, I was finally able to take Millie out on my own to show. I'll never forget our very first recognized show! It was at the Claremore Expo. I was riding an Introductory B test, so focused on keeping Millie centered and not forgetting the test, when I suddenly feel Millie throw her head straight up. I'm trying to correct her, when I hear the judge yelling at me to stop! I look up, and there is another horse running through both dressage rings without it's rider. I hopped off, Millie never spooked or became nervous in that moment, even when the horse nearly ran into her. We caught the horse, mounted back up, and resumed our test. It was a turning point in my devotion to this horse and the realization that I needed to trust her more.

In 2017, the year started off looking amazing for our partnership and showing. We were solid in the Training Level work, I was no longer afraid to canter her, and the First Level work was starting to come along. I had taken her out to a few early spring shows, and she did great! I had our sights set on First Level by the end of the year, however, those plans took a radical change by the end of the year. In June, Millie started becoming really difficult in the canter work. She started throwing her head around a lot, and eventually started rearing at the gate. I gave her time off, had her evaluated by the chiropractor and vet. We ran some lameness exams. Nothing was clear-cut and given the way she was behaving, we thought it could have been an evasion to the harder work.

We went back to work, but lightly, and tried doing work outside of the arena, with the thought that maybe Millie was ring sour. It helped a little but not entirely. This went on for several months. In late August, early September, we moved barns. In one ride, during the canter, Millie threw her head side to side so hard, that she lost her balance, I lost mine and I ended up on the ground. It shocked us both. We had a clinic the next day, so I went ahead and rode in that clinic and found out later that I had fractured my tailbone. (ouch). A few weeks later, Millie sustained an injury to her facial crest. I rushed her to Pine Ridge Equine, where it was determined that she fractured her facial crest.

During the examination for her facial injury, I spoke to Dr. Matz about her behavior issues. In addition to the fussiness and crabby behavior under saddle, Millie was also acting “studly” towards geldings and nickering and wanting to tease mares. Classic signs of an ovarian tumor. Dr. Matz ran an ultrasound of her ovaries and blood work, and she came back positive for an ovarian tumor. In October of 2017, Millie had 3 surgeries at Pine Ridge. 2 to remove the ovaries and 1 to remove bone chips out of her face.

The journey doesn't stop there however. Millie made a great recovery, but it took a long time, and during the course of her recovery, I had to come to grips with my own fear of getting back on her and resuming the work. Once we started back riding, Millie would continue to come up on her front legs or spin around any time she didn't want to go a particular direction or be ridden. It took a lot of work to get over the fear of her coming up in a rear. I had a lot of help from my friend, Jane Polk...with many lessons working on pushing Millie and I past that point! I'm very grateful to Jane for those lessons, and for her patience with me through my fear and her gentle guidance! I also had to learn to get past the fear of Millie's head toss, especially in the canter.

Last year, was the first year we were back out in the show ring after her surgeries! I'm so proud of the progress we've made. Even though it was just Introductory Level, it was a huge milestone for the 2 of us. Late last year, however, Millie's headshaking started becoming even more of an issue. It became so bad, that we could barely manage a trot and after a year of not rearing, she was starting to spin and come again. Once again, back to the drawing board for Millie. I changed bridles and tried different bits, and found some minor relief. She kept acting like she had bugs

buzzing her ears. 2 months ago, I received an email from Platinum Performance talking about Headshaking Syndrome in horses. Millie's symptoms were very similar to those of a horse with headshaking syndrome and so I ordered the supplement. After a month, she is so much better and no longer tossing her head straight up when we ride. We will be performing our first Training Level test July 11 at the CPDS Valley View Schooling Show!

If you see me have tears when I halt down centerline during our test, just know they are happy tears. I'm proud of how hard this horse tries for me, despite all the challenges we've had over the years. I feel that despite all of these challenges, Millie has taught me to have confidence, follow my instincts when I feel something isn't right, and to persevere. Millie has an amazing heart and our partnership is what Dressage is truly about.



