

Flying Changes

JANUARY 2011

President's Message

Transition decisions, schedules, shows, insurance, clinics, issues, USDF, USEF, budgets, dues increases, awards, volunteers, all deserved discussion at the December Board Meeting now it's time for us to resolve all these concerns. I am proud to have the opportunity to be President of NMDA and looking forward to work with the current board members to continue the upward progress of our club. I would be remiss if I didn't congratulate Susan Dezavelle for the outstanding body of work she contributed to NMDA past two years as President. She has definitely set the bar high for continued progress. We have an excellent board starting in 2011 with a number of returning board members to help with continuity. Rena Haynes also went above and beyond as treasure and will be continuing, also Barbara Burkhardt, Marybeth Perez-Soto, Virginia Gredell, Donald Simpson, Harold Baskin, Randi Phillips, Ulla Hudson and Linda Ettling will continue. Also congratulations being elected, Denai Meyer (Vice President), and Rusty Cook

(Secretary). I also would like to recognize Brenda Beal-Edeskuty for one winning the WEG tickets for High point at the Taos Schooling Show and also for the outstanding report she forwarded to the Board, the prose and pictures are great.

Due to consistently bad weather for our February Shows, we will be starting the schooling shows off in March, however check out the clinic/seminar with Seana Adamson Feb. 26 and 27. The schooling show schedule will be out as soon as we confirm dates with venues.

We have some goals to achieve this year, and perhaps the most pressing is to engage as many of the club members as possible. **BE A PART OF THE CLUB—VOLUNTEER!** There is always something for everyone to do. We'll have fund raisers, journals or a calendar, prizes, and shows all of which require some leg work, so pick something you can do. The club will be stronger with many

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The New Mexico Dressage Association is a United States Dressage Federation Group Member Organization (GMO) and all members are automatically USDF Group Members (GMs). For USDF Participation Membership, members must apply directly to USDF.

Calendar

January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 NMDA 2010 Year End Awards Ceremony and Banquet, Tanoan Country Club, Albuquerque
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 Seana Adamson Seminar and Clinic. Seminar - UNM Continuing Education Center, Albuquerque, NM.
27 Seana Adamson Seminar and Clinic. Cherry Tree Farm, Albuquerque, NM	28					



NMDA Community News

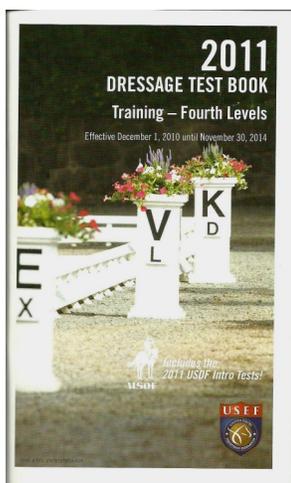
The USEF Test Booklets have arrived! NMDA just received test booklets from USEF with Intro through Fourth level 2011 tests and each NMDA members will receive one when they renew or join.

Each test allows the user to read the test instructions along with the judging criteria; review dressage arena diagrams that animate through the movements within a test; play and record your own readings of the test that are perfectly timed for an individual horse and the arena in which you are practicing; reference the official USDF dressage test sheet; review the USDF Pyramid of Training; and keep up-to-date on the latest in dressage competition through the USDF news feed.

There is also an iPhone application has been developed for USDF Introductory Level Test A, USDF Introductory Level Test B, and USDF Introductory Level Test C. To download the applications or to see a full listing of EquiTests applications, visit the iTunes App Store. <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewSoftware?id=401903052&mt=8>

Also, entry forms for the Seana Adamson Clinic, 26-27 Feb 11, are now available and must be postmarked 5 Feb 11. Seminar fees are \$60 for NMDA members; \$75 for non-members. Clinic fees are \$100 for NMDA members and \$120 for non-members. Please note—to ride in the clinic you must also attend the seminar. For more details see the website: <http://www.nmdressage.net/>

The invitations for the annual awards banquet on 22 January, are in the mail. Please note that RSVPs are requested by 15 January.



Dressage Courts

A dressage arena is called a court. There are two sizes: small and standard. The small court is 20 x 40 meters or 20^{7/8} x 43^{3/4} yards. A standard full-size Olympic dressage court is 20 x 60 meters or 20^{7/8} x 65^{5/8} yards.

The court is often used with markers (letters) to remember where to execute movements of a pattern. The markers are also used by judges to assess how precisely a movement has been made, demonstrating harmony between horse and rider.

No one knows for sure how the letters around the dressage court originated. Letters were not used until international competition began with the Olympics in the 1900's. The first competition in 1912 did not have letters. No Olympics were held in 1916 because of World War I and the letters just "appeared" in 1920 Olympics.

Although no one has ever been able to find the origin, various theories have been advanced over the years, including one theory that the letters were the first letter of the names of cities conquered by the Romans. However, markings found on the walls of the Royal Manstall (Stables) of the Imperial German Court in Berlin (prior to 1918) suggest that they indicated where each courtier or rider's horse was to stand awaiting their riders. The 'Hof' (stable yard) was large enough for the horses and their riders to parade for 'morning exercise' or assemble for ceremonial parades. The 'Hof' was three times longer than the width, namely: 20m x 60m.

The markings were:

A — Ausgang	(Exit).
K — Kaiser	(Emperor).
F — Fürst	(Prince).
P — Pferknecht	(Ostler or Groom).
V — Vassal	(Servant/Squire/Equerry).
E — Edeling/Ehregast	(Chieftain or Honoured Guest).
B — Bannertrager	(Standard Bearer).
S — Schkkanzler	(Chancellor of the Exchequer).
R — Ritter	(Knight).
M — Meier	(Steward).
H — Hofsmarshall	(Lord Chancellor).

The German Cavalry is also credited with establishing the letters. The space between the stable blocks in many German Cavalry barracks were measured as 20m x 60m. This space was further used for assembly and morning exercise. German Cavalry Manual of 1882, revised in 1912 and 1937, shows a diagram of the Reit Bahn (indoor school) as 40m x 20m. With markings A B C D in the four corners and E F on the half school line. These markings were to indicate school figures for the training of riders and horses movements required for military mounted combat to test the courage, calmness and obedience of their mount. The initial tests included collected and extended gaits, turning on the hocks, rein-back and perform four flying changes on a straight line. They were also required to jump over five small obstacles, one of which was a barrel rolled towards the oncoming horse.☞

USDF Community News



Region 5 News

Upcoming "L" Program

Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Learn about how to evaluate dressage performance at Training through Second Level from experienced "L" Faculty members, all of whom are USDF-approved and USEF-recognized judges.

The third session, Session C, hosted by Central Arizona Riding Academy, is January 29-30, 2011. The deadline to apply as a participant has passed but auditors are welcome. To learn more, contact Dorie Vlaten-Schmitz.

Top Stories

2011 USDF Election Results

The results of the Executive Board elections that were held at the 2010 Adequan/USDF Convention in Jacksonville, Florida can be found here. Elections were held for USDF Vice-President, Secretary, and Regional Director in Regions 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9.

Attention Competition Managers

If you are interested in hosting a 2011 Great American/USDF Breeders' Championships Series qualifier and/or Final, please submit the Event Application found on the USDF website, Breeders' Championships Event Application to Jennifer Johnson- Sport Programs Coordinator at: jjohnson@usdf.org

Attention USDF "L" Program Participants

The upcoming 2011 edition of the USDF "L" Participant Binder will only be available through a flash drive format. The hard copy binder, for 2011, will be discontinued. The "L" Participant flash drive, when connected to a computer with internet access, automatically updates. Questions?

Year-End Award Certificates Now Available Online

To print a personalized year-end award certificate, you must first log into the USDF Web site and then click on the word "certificate" located after the horse or rider's name in the Final Award rankings. Get your Certificate Now!

Great Member Discounts

As a USDF member, you are entitled to a discount on merchandise in the USDF store and discounts on your memberships and subscriptions with USDF's educational partners. The discount codes are listed below for your convenience. Questions?

USDF Store (10% discount) – MEM2011>

DressageTrainingOnline.com (15% discount) – 95121521

DressageClinic.com (15% discount) – USDF20108070

Please click on the SUBSCRIBE button on the home page, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on COUPON, fill out all the information and click on PROCEED, choose the membership package and continue to sign in.

Barnby Notes (Free one-year basic subscription) – USDF2010

FEI TV (20% discount) – Click on the FEI TV link from the USDF home page and you will be able to subscribe at the USDF member-discount rate.

USDF Test Apps available

An iPhone application has been developed for USDF Introductory Level Test A, Test B, and Test C. To download the applications or to see a full listing of EquiTests applications, visit the iTunes App Store. Convention Wrap Up

Awards are in the Mail!

All awards not presented at the 2010 Adequan®/USDF Salute Gala and Annual Awards Banquet will be shipped to the recipient. Please contact USDF if you do not receive your award by January 30, 2011. Questions?

2010 Salute Gala & Annual Awards Banquet Pictures Available – Order Yours Today!

Would you like to order a picture of you or a friend on stage at the 2010 Salute Gala & Annual Awards Banquet? Visit www.ourfavoritephotos.com and click on the "USDF National Convention" link. Once you enter the password, which is 120310, you will be able to view the proofs and order photos. Deadlines

Horse and Rider Score Checks on Web site to be Updated Soon!

Beginning December 15, 2010, scores earned in the USDF 2010 competition year will be archived and will only be available for purchase via a Lifetime Score Check. 2011 scores will be available free of charge beginning December 15, 2010.

Regional Championship Competitors Take Note:

Your home region, or region of residence, is based on the address USDF has in the database for you. You can compete in any Regional Championship, however, if it is not your home region, you must file a Change of Region Form. This must be done annually if you plan to compete at a championship outside your region of residence and can be done after December 15. Be aware of deadlines and fees as indicated on the form.☺

Around the Barn— Quick Barn Fixes

by: David Preston

September 01 2005 Article # 6017, www.thehorse.com
You can create a functional, safe barn in an existing structure on your property with some practical, inexpensive, and uncomplicated modifications. You don't need to strain your budget to alter some features of the building that are important to the safe and healthy housing of your horses. There are several specific areas in your barn to address:

- Structural problems;
- Lighting and wiring;
- Chewable surfaces;
- Grain storage;
- Ventilation;
- Clear aisleways; and
- Storage of hay and shavings.

Shoring Up Support Posts

Serious structural issues and questions are best addressed by building professionals before you try a quick fix, which might do more damage. Having said that, however, there is one area of concern that can and should be tackled before you undertake the other changes suggested. One of the most common problems found in older barns is deteriorating support posts and/or framing. Wood structural members on or too close to the ground or exposed to weather might have visible rot or termite damage, which seriously weakens the overall integrity of the structure. If the building has actually settled as a result of the damage, it might have to be jacked back into place as part of the repair. Usually, this can be accomplished with inexpensive hydraulic jacks and temporary posts or shoring.

Your building needs to be supported while the damaged material is replaced with concrete or treated lumber where the main supporting timbers meet the ground or floor. The excavated soil and new material must be capable of supporting the load expected of it. Therefore, always dig out more than the depth of the previous material. If the problem is settling caused by poor soil, the solution is more complex. The choice is to excavate until adequate bearing capacity is found or design a different foundation system for the supports that spread the weight over a larger area.

Safe Lighting and Wiring

One of the most overlooked areas of barn safety in the older barn is lighting. Just because the lights come on when the switch is flipped does not mean the wiring is safe. Follow the wires and inspect the path they follow to the breaker box. Look for rodent damage to wiring and excessive dust build-up in electrical boxes and fixtures. Any wire within reach of horses, equipment, children, dogs, hay bales, and/or feed containers should be protected by conduit.

Ensure that the electrical service to the barn is adequate and up-to-date; this might mean hiring an electrician to inspect the service.

Often a change of use in an existing structure presents new risks. If you are adding water in an area of the barn where it did not previously exist, make sure the outlets in that area are ground fault protected. Make sure switches have weatherproof covers and are outside splash range.

When replacing or adding light fixtures, several factors should be kept in mind. In theory, barn lights are not left on unless someone is in the barn. Energy efficiency is less important than safety.

One of the most dangerous conditions in a barn is dust buildup in areas where the heat from lighting also builds up when light bulbs get too hot. Bulbs can explode, showering horses and humans with glass and sparks. Other items that can cause heat buildup are bird nests or hay debris. Wire or explosion-resistant light covers are available at most retail home improvement stores as well as farm supply and electrical supply houses. With any kind of lighting, make sure to use bulbs no larger than the rating for that fixture. An oversized bulb can cause the wire in the fixture to overheat without blowing the breaker. It is more sensible to add fixtures than to overload the existing ones.

Protecting Chewable Surfaces

Horses will often chew on available surfaces while standing in their stalls. Whether damage of this nature is due to association with being fed in the stalls, relief of nervous energy, aggression toward neighboring horses, boredom, or dietary deficiencies, the resulting chewed surfaces are unsightly, unsanitary, and unsafe.

One of the best ways to prevent chewing wood is to cover or replace the enticing surface with steel, concrete, or masonry. Very hard woods like oak are also effective against all but the most determined chewers. Horizontal ledges in stalls should be eliminated where possible.

However, the preference for open-front stalls is popular for our horses, and these have horizontal surfaces. There is more opportunity for chewing damage with those types of barns.

Since open-front stalls are never safe for young, fractious, or breeding horses, every barn should have at least one stall fully enclosed by bars or mesh for visiting or new horses.

Surfaces that are inviting to the chewer can be easily covered with metal. Use material that is thick enough to withstand abuse. Galvanized sheet metal, available at larger commercial drywall supply houses, should be 16 gauge or thicker. Thinner (20 or 24 gauge) material bends easily and will result in a very dangerous condition if the edges become flared out.

A better choice than sheet metal is steel angle iron, available in three-sixteenths of an inch or one-quarter-inch

The Vet's Office

The NM Equine Protection Fund

Dear Horse Lovers and Friends:

This is the time of year when we feel compelled to share with those less fortunate. In the spirit of the holidays, consider giving what you can to the Equine Protection Fund.

The Equine Protection Fund's mission is to help less fortunate New Mexicans care responsibly for their horses. Think of it as the "United Way of the Horse World." Money donated to the fund supports the Emergency Feed Assistance program, which provides horse feed for those who have lost a job or have suffered a catastrophic illness and are unable to care for their equines; it also supports our low-income gelding and humane euthanasia programs as well as a racehorse rehoming program that is under development.

Since the fund started in May, we have helped 49 equines in need. With your support, we can help many more horses and their families in need.

We are all so blessed to have horses in our lives. For some of us, they provide a living; for others they provide love, companionship, sport and fun. Won't you give to them during this holiday season? Please go to the web to donate directly to the fund at <http://equineprotectionfund.org/>
Donations are tax-deductible.

Thanks so much!

Emily Esterson



Muscles, Tendons, and Ligaments...[Oh My!]

Stacey Oke, DVM, MSc

January 01 2010 Article # 15699; www.thehorse.com

When it comes to equine locomotion, it takes three to tango.

Galloping a mile on the Curragh. Barrel racing. The passage, piaffe, and flying changes. The horse has always been a coveted creature for his magnificent capacity to perform acrobatlike feats. But don't be deceived: Despite his apparently effortless athleticism, all of his individual body parts are hard at work.

As the poet Lily Whittaker eloquently penned,

"What is a horse?

A horse waltzes like breeze over rivers.

She curvets and leaps like rain shivers.

A horse is a marionette."

Indeed, the muscles, tendons, and ligaments function as the wooden cross and strings that drive the marionette's movement. Horses' beauty in motion is achieved via the culmination of a complex and highly integrated interaction between muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, and a variety of other connective tissues. Successful coordination of all musculoskeletal system components is imperative for smooth, fluid, pain-free movement. Injury to or malfunction of any part of the locomotor apparatus will negatively impact performance.

By virtue of their remarkable athleticism, horses are prone to injury. Musculoskeletal injuries are the most common cause of poor performance in horses. Understanding the intimate relationship between these three different types of structures is an important first step in keeping them healthy. This article reviews the structure and function of skeletal muscles, tendons, and ligaments, looks at some common concerns associated with each of these structures, and briefly discusses means of keeping them healthy.

Skeletal Muscles

The muscles that attach to bones via specialized connective tissues called tendons are referred to as skeletal muscles. These muscles are made of bundles of long muscle fibers that are held together by a coating of connective tissue. Muscles are considered "contractile organs," as they cause movement once activated.

The long muscle fibers that make up skeletal muscle are made of hundreds to thousands of myofibrils--the basic units of skeletal muscle. Microscopically, these myofibrils contain long protein molecules called actin and myosin that exist in a functional unit called a sarcomere. It is these long actin and myosin molecules lying side by side inside the myofibrils that give skeletal muscle its classic "banding pattern" (also called striations) observable under a microscope.

In addition to contributing to the aesthetics of muscles, the interaction of actin and myosin is ultimately responsible for muscle contraction.

The structure and exact function of both the actin and myosin molecules are complex. Essentially, each of the myosin molecules has "fingers" at its head that "walk along" the actin filaments, resulting in contraction (shortening) of the sarcomere.

When all of a skeletal muscle's sarcomeres contract (shorten) due to that "walking" of myosin along actin, movement occurs. One of the best examples for illustrating how muscle contraction results in movement is the equine stifle: a simple hinge joint. When the horse contracts muscle groups on the caudal aspect (back) of the femur that connect via tendons to the caudal aspect of the tibia, he lifts the tibia and the rest of the limb closer to his body. In contrast, when he contracts the muscle groups on the cranial aspect (front) of the femur extending from the pelvis to the tibia, he pulls the tibia in a rostral direction (forward).

When Things Go Wrong: Skeletal Muscles

Common muscle injuries horses sustain include tears and strains. They

Clinic Corner

New Mexico Dressage Association

Presents:

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY STRATEGIES FOR DRESSAGE

With
Dr. Seana Adamson



February 26-27, 2011

Feb 26—Seminar at NMSU Albuquerque Center on Indian School

Feb 27—Riding Clinic at Cherry Tree Farm

Day 1: A Full day classroom seminar covering the following topics*:

How the mind works-The Brain Waves of Peak Performance
Performance Anxiety and Fear. How to conquer!
Concentration, Focus and Memorization.
Polishing your performance with Visualization and Mental Rehearsal
Keep yourself on track with Self Talk and Affirmations
Maximize your potential with Hypnosis and Self-hypnosis

*The classroom curriculum is flexible, so bring any personal concerns and we will do our best to address them.

Day 2: Private Sport Psychology counseling sessions (one hour) or private dressage lessons (45 minutes in duration).

**Information on fees and sign-up dates to be published at a later date.
Check on www.nmdressage.net for news and announcements.**



Dr. Seana Adamson is a psychologist, dressage trainer, author, and a USDF Gold Medalist. She has competed extensively in both dressage and eventing, and works with students from training level to Grand Prix, Seana and her students have won multiple regional and national awards. She is based at Franktown Meadows Equestrian Center in Carson City, Nevada.

Clinic Corner—“Who IS Alfredo Hernandez, anyway?”

By Susan Olsen

Imagine this...

...a man from Spain who travels the world ground-training horses, evoking feelings of joy and accomplishment in riders and their horses. This past summer, in Santa Fe NM, I had the opportunity to observe and train with this talented man. I watched him work with very different horses; an imported European Warmblood who had previously been described as “a PSG/Intermediare I Level horse who will never piaffe or passage”; a Saddlebred learning to do the Spanish Walk in a royal manner; and young horses who had just a few months’ experience with the bit or under saddle. These horses have begun to develop elevated and balanced turns on the shoulder and forward, well-framed walks. I saw him diagnose initial resistance or recalcitrance, then adjusting his technique to transform feelings of claustrophobia, dominance, fear or panic to a spirit of cooperation, rhythm, and focused work. Wow, you might ask – who is this man?

Prior to attending a first clinic with him, I asked the same question of Joan Bolton, who is my dressage teacher/trainer – “Who *IS* Alfredo Hernandez, anyway?” With no time to research him on the web, and trusting her judgment, I agreed to attend the first clinic on her assurance that I, and my horse would benefit.

Alfredo Hernandez learned his skills in Spain and Portugal. He refined them by working with thousands of horses, all over the world. His background includes Classical Dressage, Doma Vaquera, and training horses for bullfighting. His groundwork supports the efforts of many of today’s leading American dressage riders. Although experience plays a significant role in his success, I believe his “equine intuition” is the magic ingredient. It is the one aspect of his technique that is difficult for him to explain, and while it is easy to demonstrate, it is what makes him a natural talent.

Aside from Alfredo’s talent; why would I find this experience exciting enough to write about? Four reasons - my love of my horse (Beau - a young big bay Thoroughbred newly put to the bit), my passion for dressage (returning after experiences in the 1970’s), my great interest in groundwork (from 3 years of natural horsemanship), and finally, to see all three providing me and my horse (as well as others in his clinics) with a fun, interesting and rewarding way to progress together. Don’t get me wrong – it is hard work! High energy, intense, and stimulating – not all owners want to “DYI –

do it yourself”, and that is ok – much of what Alfredo does is retained by the horses – they have great memories and retain new body use patterns.

What really holds it together is working with Joanie Bolton. She is there during every session, and has become accomplished enough with Alfredo’s techniques to be able to review my progress in the intervals between his visits. Additionally, she helps me relate groundwork to riding, as I will describe a bit later.

The start my horse Beau and I had on the ground was quite basic, although a significant step up from the natural horsemanship groundwork I had been practicing with my horse in a string halter. This work with Alfredo incorporates contact with the bit – just what my horse needs at this time in his development. We started with the turn on the forehand from the ground, utilizing side-reins and holding the reins (with contact) in one hand, with a ground-work whip in the other hand. It has much to do with cueing the horse with a loud cluck timed with a tap with the whip, so that eventually the cluck can be used as a cue when mounted. Seeing the horse step under with his inside hind isn’t enough – according to Alfredo there are three key elements: 1) forward movement, 2) framing, or roundness, and 3) lateral/crossing steps. To illustrate this point, he told us that the difference between a dressage horse and a bullfighting horse is the forward movement – in dressage the horse needs to cover ground – in bullfighting the horse needs to pivot, since bulls can move extremely quickly in a straight line – but are not very good at turning (picture a matador pivoting).



Turn on Forehand – note Beau’s inside hind leg stepping under and forward, and the way his neck is framed.

Clinic Corner—“Who IS Alfredo Hernandez, anyway?”

By Susan Olsen

Continued from Page 7

Expanding on the turn on the forehand, we are learning to cover more ground – making a bigger circle of 10-20 meters, and ending up at the wall with lateral movement. If Beau becomes unbalanced, we go back to the turn on the forehand, to achieve a rebalance. I like this approach, because when I move my horse sideways, he becomes calmer and more focused on what I'm asking him to do. Once on the wall, we focus on backing up as well as steps forward. Also, tapping the hind legs to encourage lifting the leg to a height that will require the horse to balance on three legs (a prelude to passage and piaffe). Body language (for the person!) is an important part of the equation – think standing tall, chest out, not collapsing at the waist. This stance is also seen in the martial arts and developed with Pilates. It gives support to the significant upwards and forward momentum the horse develops. Something I appreciate very much is that the contact on the bit is light, with frequent half-halts.

So how does groundwork relate to riding? Me in the saddle, Joan on the ground, both of us cueing the horse for a turn on the forehand....then she releases her connection with the bit and I ask for the trot....and get the most elevated, round, 'air-filled' trot I've ever experienced! And I can make it last...thanks to biomechanics I've learned in lessons with Joan and Mary Wanless (*Ride With Your Mind*), and the focused “deep practice” inspired by Sandy Howard (USET in 70's-80's). Now you know why working with Alfredo to develop my young horse is so exciting.

Others in the Alfredo Hernandez clinics are excited about the groundwork he does which helps their horses (and them) learn the passage and piaffe! I saw him work with many horses over the past few days that were in various stages of learning to lift their feet, balance on three feet, and to become more rhythmic.

It seems that the future may hold promise for more advanced training for me and my horse, as well! In fact I feel through these experiences that I'm living my dream – and didn't know that this would be part of it! If you want to know more about Alfredo, and what he does, you should meet him and see him work! He travels all over the US – in fact he's almost never home, but you can also see him on the web – there are videos on YouTube, and he visits us in Santa Fe regularly (call Joan Bolton at 505 699 2872).☺

Alfredo teaching Mango to lift his front foot above a board, in order to balance on three feet, in preparation for piaffe, with Liz his owner watching (Joanie is holding the board).



Joanie on Mango beginning to piaffe, supported by Alfredo

Region 5 Community News

Allow me to introduce myself as your new Regional Director for our USDF Region 5! My name is Heather Petersen and I'm very honored to have been allowed to represent you in this position. Many thanks need to go to Theresa Hunt for her 9 years of service to our region as the previous Regional Director and we hope that we will continue to see her in the USDF governance process!

My family and I live in Peyton, Colorado, just east of Colorado Springs. We have a nice little acreage where we have 3 horses, 2 goats, 2 geese, 3 ducks, 2 dogs, many cats and many many chickens. Michael, Elizabeth, Sarah and I love our little oasis and enjoy not having to live in town anymore! I have a very supportive and wonderful husband who takes care of the zoo when I'm off running horse shows and provides a lot of wonderful technical support to help make my shows even more user friendly at the same time. I enjoy doing a lot of volunteer work with several different organizations providing many different services and I also enjoy being a technical delegate periodically throughout the year.

I look forward to meeting many of you over the next three years and hope to travel to as many of the Group Member Organizations as I can. I do plan to attend Regional Championships also each year, so if you are there competing or volunteering, please say hi and introduce yourself. I would love to hear your ideas and thoughts on where you would like to see dressage go in our part of the country. Please also feel free to contact me to discuss ideas or concerns at any time – my email is slush@drwgw.net or call me at 719.683.8435. I

represent you and I would love to know your thoughts.

We have some great resources in our Region that we can utilize for better communication. Please check out the Region 5 website, www.usdfregion5.org, and if you have ideas for things you would like to see or events you would like listed, please let me know. We are also starting a Regional email list that will send out periodic updates on what is going on in USDF or various parts of our Region and I would encourage you to submit events for distribution. If you would like to be added to this email list, again, please let me know and we'll make sure you're in the know.

I really look forward to working for and with all of you.

Heather Petersen

Region 5 Director

World Wide Web Wire

Check out: NM Nicker (www.nmnicker.com)--Your comprehensive resource for all things equine in the land of enchantment. Here you can find information about shows, clinics, fun-rides, services, facilities, clubs, and horses/tack/etc for sale.

You can contact New Mexico Nicker anytime by sending an e-mail to thea@nmnicker.com.

Around the Barn — Quick Barn Fixes (cont. from pg 4)

thicknesses. Make sure each side of the angle iron is large enough to protect the area in question, while not so wide as to protrude.

The metal should be fastened using hardware that is safe and leaves no sharp edges. Screws or lag bolts are always superior to smooth nails, which can work loose over time. Remember, the horse will likely put his mouth on these fasteners, so there is a need to eliminate sharp edges wherever possible. Similarly, ensure that end cuts and joints in the metal you are applying are not sharp or ragged. File or grind them down if necessary. The angle iron can be painted before installation to match existing stalls.

Safe Grain Storage

Grain and supplements should be stored in containers not easily accessible to—or opened by—horses wandering out of stalls. They should be rodent- and pet-proof. Even if you don't have a feed room with a solid door that shuts tightly, there is a suitable, safe alternative solution for storing these perishables. Thirty-gallon galvanized metal trash cans are one of the best choices for durability and cost. Lids can be secured by using bungee cords hooked to each side handle through the lid on top. This will dissuade even the most resourceful of the omnipresent population of raccoons, opossums, and other critters.

Plastic and/or rubber containers are not a first choice as they can be chewed by critters and they crack in extreme weather. In hot weather, some of the commercial sweet feeds will mold or rot in airtight containers. Storing no more than the amount of grain consumed in a week helps ensure the freshness and integrity of the feed. A 30-gallon trash can will hold approximately three 50-pound bags of feed. Store the cans inside the building and away from standing water.

Adequate Ventilation

The movement of air in any building used to house livestock is very important to the health and well-being of the

animals confined inside, especially when horses are in the barn for long periods of time. The addition of ridge and roof vents are of course the most efficient method used to move air in and out. However, open windows and doors can provide a good supply of fresh air.

If the building has a large door (or doors) that can be left open but a barrier is still needed, adding a gate can provide safety and allow sufficient air movement. An opening on each side of the structure will allow the advantage of air transfer no matter the direction of the wind.

Clear Aisleways

Keeping the main aisle in your barn free of implements will allow unrestricted movement of horses and equipment. If you don't have a separate room, extra stall, or a separate storage area, hang these items out of reach of horses, but keep them easily accessible. There are a variety of hooks, hangers, and ready-made shelf systems available at hardware, farm supply, and feed stores to suit most needs. Remember to hang implements in a way that traffic through the aisle is not impeded.

Storage of Hay and Shavings

Even though hay is best stored in a separate building from livestock, this is not always possible. The next best choice would be a loft, as that way air can move over and under the stored material to keep it dry and minimize the chance for combustion. However, some farms don't like lofts because they "close in" the tops of stalls and reduce airflow, especially in older barns.

If a loft does not exist or is not a practical addition to the building, designate a space as far from the stalls as possible and stack the bales or bags on pallets or skids. These are commonly used in shipping building materials and can be acquired easily through a home improvement center or feed store in all geographical areas. Storage in this way will allow minimal airflow underneath and prevent the loss of the bottom row to moisture. ☞

In Memoriam

"D"

(Air Apparent)

1 April 1992—10 December 2010

2005 USDF All Breeds Award National Champion, Thoroughbred Horses For Sport, AA. Training level

Loved by D.J.

The Vet's Office — Muscles, Tendons and Ligaments...[Oh, My!] (cont. from pg 5)

might also develop muscle metabolism abnormalities such as exertional rhabdomyolysis (tying-up) or a form of it called polysaccharide storage myopathy (PSSM, see sidebar on page 24). Nonetheless, other skeletal muscle abnormalities are also important.

At the World Equine Veterinary Association (WEVA) 2009 Congress, held Sept. 24-28 in Guarujá-SP, Brazil (See page 32 for a wrap-up of this meeting.), Stephanie Valberg, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVIM, professor of large animal medicine and director of the University of Minnesota Equine Center, described three newly recognized myopathies in horses.

Each appears to have an immune-mediated component (i.e., the horse's own immune system contributes to the disease), and the bacterium *Streptococcus equi* subspecies *equi* appears to play a role in both.

The first of these newly described conditions is an acute severe rhabdomyolysis characterized by a stiff gait and firm, swollen, and painful back and gluteal muscles. The second myopathy is an infarctive purpura hemorrhagica, meaning that the horse loses blood supply to a particular region of muscle, causing tissue death and resulting in severe swelling. These horses typically present with painful lameness and muscle stiffness, and they can also become colicky. Finally, veterinarians have also reported a rapid onset of muscle atrophy with stiffness and general malaise. This condition is referred to as an immune-mediated polymyositis. To date, veterinarians have only reported these conditions in a small number of horses. Since the fatality rates are high in affected horses, researchers are eager to delve deeper into these novel diseases to understand them better.

Tendons

Tendons are strong bands of soft connective tissue that attach skeletal muscles to bones. Tendons are comprised of many parallel strands of collagen—a distinct type of protein found in connective tissues, cartilage, and bone. Collagen molecules link together and aggregate first into microfibrils, then into larger collagen fibrils. The collagen fibrils further aggregate to form collagen fibers, which are the basic units of a tendon. A thin sheath wraps each collagen fiber, and a number of fibers aggregate into primary, secondary, and tertiary bundles, which ultimately make up a tendon.

Tenocytes—specialized tendon cells that secrete collagen, which arranges into fibrils outside the cells—also are responsible for synthesizing a small amount of elastin (a protein similar to collagen) fibers and various other molecules (e.g., proteoglycans). Tenocytes make small, gradual, biomechanically relevant adjustments to extracellular matrix composition when mechanical forces on the tendon change, such as those forces tendons encounter during growth, weight gain, or exercise.

The basic function of any tendon is to transmit the muscle's force to the bone to produce movement. Due to the normal structure of the Type I collagen fibers, tendons are "crimped." When the tendon is loaded during motion, the collagen fibers uncrimp, but only to a point. If uncrimped and stretched too much, the collagen fibers fail and injury occurs.

Thus, the high density of collagen fibers in tendons is a double-edged sword: the collagen makes the tendons extremely strong, but they are not very elastic.

To revisit the stifle as our example, the muscles on the cranial and caudal aspects of the femur (that contract to extend or flex the stifle) attach to the tibia via tendons.

Ligaments

Like tendons, ligaments are tough bands of soft connective tissue with a high proportion of collagen fibers arranged in a similar hierarchy as that described for tendons. The function of a ligament is to connect two bones or cartilages together. Ligaments differ from tendons not only in their anatomic location, but also in their composition. Ligaments have fewer collagen fibers than tendons; these are not as well-organized as tendon collagen and have more noncollagenous extracellular components. Nonetheless, the microscopic organization, function, and behavior of tendons and ligaments are relatively similar.

In the stifle, a surprising number of ligaments stabilize the joint. Fourteen, to be exact. Within the joint, for example, are the cranial and caudal

cruciate ligaments and ligaments of the menisci. Outside the joint are the middle, medial, and lateral patellar ligaments and the medial and lateral collateral femorotibial ligaments.

When Things Go Wrong: Tendons and Ligaments

"The structures in the lower limb are particularly injury-prone, from the superficial digital flexor tendon to the suspensory ligament," says Jennifer Barrett, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVS, assistant professor of surgery at Virginia Tech's Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center in Leesburg.

According to Barrett, tendon injuries commonly arise from damage to the matrix that makes up the tendon, and cellular responses to that damage progress over time until the tendon inflammation becomes more obvious. In a ligament it is more common for a silent lesion to slowly progress until lameness is apparent. Ligament changes are usually identified during ultrasonographic evaluation, when the veterinarian might notice the ligament has detached from bone, or a core area within the ligament has lost normal fiber pattern. To date, the exact processes that cause some tendons and ligaments to heal better than others are unknown.

"Current evidence suggests that after an injury to a tendon or ligament, there is an inflammatory reaction which causes swelling, constriction of the local blood vessels, and release of inflammatory mediators (called cytokines) that break down cells and recruit other cells that play a crucial role in the healing process," says Barrett.

"The tenocytes are capable of synthesizing new collagen fibers, but the type of collagen produced is often different (Type III fibers instead of Type I), and they are disorganized," she continues.

The resultant scar tissue in "healed" tendons and ligaments limits fiber and fascicle (small bundles of fibers) movement, and the healing process appears to alter the overall biochemical and biomechanical properties of these soft connective tissues.

"As a result, re-injury is a major concern in athletic horses, an economic burden, and an all-too-common career-limiting event that could even result in the loss of the horse," summarizes Barrett.

Keeping Connective Tissues Healthy

In an effort to minimize injury and maximize performance, some owners, trainers, and veterinarians go to great lengths to protect these delicate components of the musculoskeletal system. Hilary Clayton, BVMS, PhD, MRCVS, the Mary Anne McPhail Dressage Chair in Equine Sports Medicine at Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, studies the biomechanics of equine gait in sport horses. Clayton has authored several books on locomotion, biomechanics, and conditioning in athletic horses, and she believes regular exercise can help a horse's muscles, tendons, and ligaments become stronger and less prone to injury.

Research has shown that regular exercise helps maintain bone structure, but scientists have said the jury is out on whether adult equine tendons or ligaments can become stronger with exercise. There is a suggestion that there is a window of opportunity in horses less than 18 months old to improve tendon structure, but authors of a study that showed exercise cannot modulate tendon structure in adult horses were unable to detect a significant change in tendon structure, even when foals were exercised from 3 weeks old.

Regardless, Clayton suggests an ideal approach to exercise for equine musculoskeletal wellness includes different gaits and speeds performed on a variety of surfaces and terrains to provide the limbs with a diverse loading pattern.

"When designing a conditioning program to strengthen the musculoskeletal tissues, it is important to introduce new types of exercise slowly, to build up the workload gradually, and to give the horse an easy day after a hard workout," advises Clayton. "Avoid doing the same type of exercise in the same arena day after day because this type of repetitive training may lead to an overuse injury, such as a bowed tendon or a pulled suspensory."

Take-Home Message

The musculoskeletal system is a complex network of various tissue types that must function in a coordinated fashion so the horse can move in an organized, fluid, and purposeful fashion. Going back to basics and understanding how these structures are put together is an important first step in understanding the science of locomotion and biomechanics, and how to keep the horse's musculoskeletal system sound and healthy. ☞

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Save the date! Carol Lavell, a 1992 US Olympic dressage team bronze medalist on her great horse Gifted, and respected clinician and philanthropist, will do a two-day dressage clinic in Albuquerque, April 16 and 17, 2011 at Cherry Tree Farm. Carol has been described by Hilda Gurney as "one of the top riders in the country...an incredible teacher." Riders are encouraged to take a second lesson; auditors are invited to join in the learning. Call Kathleen Martin 505 944-5929 or e-mail kmartin05@msn.com for more information.

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NMDA Mission Statement:

The New Mexico Dressage Association (NMDA) is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of New Mexico. NMDA is also a Group Member Organization of the United States Dressage Federation (USDF). The organization's purpose is to promote the understanding of dressage and to develop skill and excellence in its use, as well as encourage, promote and conduct exhibitions, shows, clinics and other events by which interested people may develop their potential as riders and train their horses to the extent of their capabilities. Privileges of membership include but are not limited to participation in the organization's activities and receiving the Handbook/Test Book, and monthly newsletter. Members also become Group Members (GM) of USDF, with all its benefits.

The Back Page

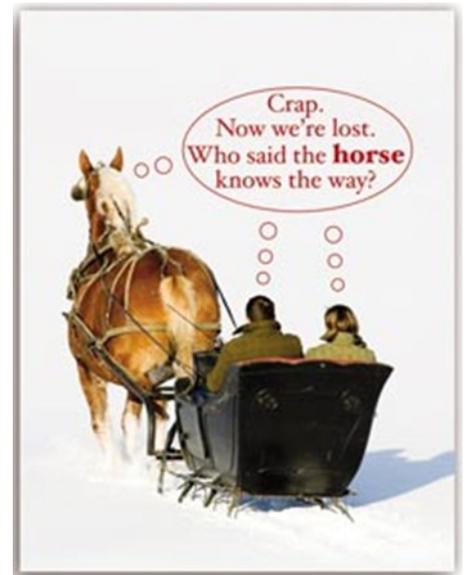
hands and minds rather than exhausting a few.

We have already started a campaign to attract past members who didn't renew last year. Our goal is to get membership up near 200, and if everyone does a little something it will only add to the quality of our shows, value to our education, and enhance the morale of the club.

Good luck to all our members to reach their goals this year and have a safe, joyful, experience with their horses. Please let the board know by phone or email of any ideas to improve our club.

Sincerely,

John Collins
President



Have a great Holiday
Season and a Happy
New Year