

DECEMBER 2023



SHOULDER-IN OR,  
20M CIRCLES ARE FUN

JUNIORS SPEAK UP

OKTOBERFEST,  
DAS IST WUNDERBAR

FINDING AN EQUINE PRO,  
EPISODE/PART III

# Tracking Up

Newsletter  
of the  
South Carolina  
Dressage &  
Combined Training  
Association

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

TRISHA DINGLE

December 2023

The end of the year is a common time for reflection, and having a whirlwind trip to the USDF Convention this past weekend I had plenty of time to reflect both on the planes and while waiting at three different airports...

Although I was only in Omaha 36 hours (primarily to accept my award for the article I'd written), I was fortunate enough to be able to attend a handful of lectures. One was on why horses or riders get "stuck" at a particular level - Lilo Fore, Bill McMullin, and Sarah Geiki were the presenters. While the talk was focused on the specific movements and was in itself

very informative, Lilo said two things which really stuck in my mind: one, is that the purpose of dressage training is to develop the gaits as well as develop the \*mind\* of the horse. And the second being that the rider must be quiet enough to listen to the \*horse\*. Two very simple statements, yet both are things that so many riders seem to forget. As a young professional trainer I felt the stress of having to perform; I needed to prove myself to my peers and clients, and I needed to provide results for all the money my clients put into their horses. This resulted in a lot of mental stress to myself, and did absolutely nothing to improve the minds or well being of the horses in my care. Because the \*only\* entity I need to worry about is in fact my HORSE: he doesn't know the difference between winning a national championship or having a relaxing trail ride. But what he does know is how he feels doing the activity - the relaxation, enjoyment, and camaraderie with me, or the constant stress, anxiety, and fear of not performing to my arbitrary standard. Think about it.

I'd really love to say that this was an "aha" moment and I now am always listening to my horses and always thinking about their mental health - but alas I am human, and a competitive one at that,

so this is a constant struggle, as I'm sure it is with many riders. I'm not perfect, but fortunately my boys are very forgiving; I strive every day and with every ride to stay quiet and listen to them, and to form each workout with the overall goal of developing them not just physically but mentally.

As I write this I am reminded that tomorrow is December 7th - Pearl Harbor Day to many, but to me the one year anniversary that I laid to rest my stallion WH Bodacious due to a ruptured eye and 100% blindness. Bo was the horse who made me fall in love with Arabians, taught me about stallions, and who ultimately was responsible for the road my life took. I made so many mistakes in his training, but I'm grateful that I started on my journey to enlightenment while he was still in my life, so that even though our time was cut shorter than I expected I was able to value and enjoy our time together during his retirement, even if I messed up a lot in our early years. Fortunately horses are amazingly forgiving for all that we humans put them through.

Remember to hug your horse(s) tonight.

Happy Holidays!

Trisha

pc: kmagrnis



pc: Stephen Lane Photography





Tracking Up,  
the newsletter of the  
South Carolina Dressage  
& Combined Training  
Association

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## DECEMBER 2023

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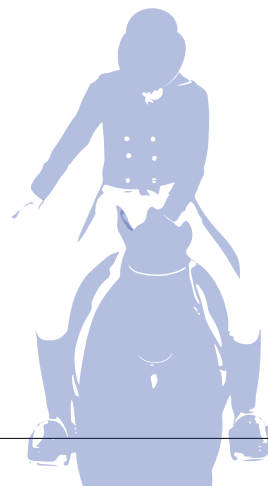
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Contact the editor directly ([editor@scdcta.com](mailto:editor@scdcta.com)) for issue-specific deadlines for submissions.

### SCDCTA WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Want to see more news and photos from your fellow members? So does Tracking Up! We love to share your accomplishments, everyday activities, and cute photos.

We'd also love articles on your training or competition experiences, reviews of books, videos or products, or even just sharing a bit about your favorite horses. Send questions, ideas, completed articles (in MS Word), photos (jpeg) to: [editor@scdcta.com](mailto:editor@scdcta.com). If sharing a professional photo, please make sure you have provided photographer credit.



You can also share news and photos via the SCDCTA Facebook group! To make sure the editor is aware of your posts, please tag "Trisha Louise Dingle" in anything you'd like to see in the newsletter.

# WHO YOU GONNA CALL

## A Guide to SCDCTA

### Committee Heads

SCDCTA Welcomes  
**Lillian Frenzel** as our  
**Jr/YR Representative!**

Lillian Frenzel has excelled academically, participating in challenging honors and AP courses while currently enrolled in a



dual enrollment program. With a consistent presence on the honor roll and maintaining an unweighted GPA of 3.75, she ranks among the top 17% of students in her grade. Beyond academics, she has competed through the second level on La Reina HU. She has helped start and train multiple young horses, and clips, braids, and show-grooms professionally. Lillian has qualified for the 2023 SCDCTA Oktoberfest Championship at First level and the 2022 SCDCTA Oktoberfest Championship at training level. She qualified for the 2023 USDF GAIG Region 3 Regional Championships at first level and dressage seat equitation, as well as the 2022 USDF GAIG Region 3 Regional Championships in dressage seat equitation. In addition, Lillian has been an active volunteer, assisting with the set up for the 2023 Oktoberfest Schooling Show Championships as well as contributing numerous articles to Tracking Up.

SCDCTA's day-to-day operations are conducted by a series of committees responsible for different activities. If you've ever wondered who you should call with questions about getting a schooling show recognized, how your business can become a show sponsor, or who to call about a clinic idea, here is a handy list to make sure you reach the best person as quickly as possible.

- » **Membership:** Missouri Powers (Membership@scdcta.com)
- » **Recognized USDF dressage shows:**
- » **Marcy Hippey** (President@scdcta.com)-volunteers, judges/officials, administrative
- » **Carol Freligh** (Treasurer@scdcta.com)—entries, program
- » **Schooling Show Recognition:** Linda Kelly (showrecog@scdcta.com)
- » **Schooling Show Championships:** Carol Freligh (Treasurer@scdcta.com)
- » **Sponsorship:** Tierney Boyd (Tierney@scdcta.com)
- » **Newsletter-website liason:** Trisha Dingle (Editor@scdcta.com)
- » **Juniors/Young Riders:** Kathryn Butt (klb317@gmail.com)-including annual junior clinics
- » **Education/Clinics:** Justine Wilson (VicePresident@scdcta.com)
- » **Communications:** Lisa Hinkle (Secretary@scdcta.com)-including social media
- » **Year-end Points and Awards:** Sharon Anderson (Sharon@scdcta.com)
- » **Annual Awards Banquet:**
- » Sharon Anderson (sharon@scdcta.com) — **venue, administrative**
- » Tierney Boyd Tierney@scdcta.com) — **silent auction**
- » **Volunteer Coordinator:** Marcy Hippey (President@scdcta.com)
- » **Volunteer Hours:** Sharon Anderson (Sharon@scdcta.com)
- » **Elections:** Lisa Hinkle (Secretary@scdcta.com)

To reach the entire board, please email info@scdcta.com



# SCDCTA



## BUSINESS NEWS

### **Sharon Anderson; Points/Volunteers/Awards**

The 2023 Awards Banquet is just around the corner! This year it will be held on February 3 at Hotel Indigo in Mount Pleasant, SC. Banquet info will be on the website and emailed to members as soon as it becomes available. 2023 Year End Awards are currently being finalized and will be posted by December 15th. Please remember to submit your volunteer forms! And its never to early to start volunteering - donations to the Awards Banquet Silent Auction (valued over \$150) will fulfill your 2023 volunteer hour requirements. For 2024, submitting articles for Tracking Up, assisting board members in various duties, and volunteering at local SCDCTA schooling shows can get your volunteer requirements fulfilled early in the year.

### **Missouri Freligh, Membership**

It's time to start planning for 2024! Our official membership year starts December 1st, make sure you get your memberships in early so any shows you attend will count for rider awards, horse certificates, and year and awards. Remember horses must be lifetime registered as well. All forms can be found at [scdcta.com](http://scdcta.com) under FORMS. And membership isn't just for competitors - SCDCTA members receive our quarterly award-winning magazine TRACKING UP , as well as receive priority registration and discounts on all SCDCTA educational events (including group membership to USDF and access to many of their educational events).

### **Kathryn Butt, Junior program**

The 2024 Jr/YR Clinic will be held June 28-30 at the SC Equine Park in Camden, SC. Juniors are already actively fundraising with plans of holding another Bake Sale at Low Country Dressage the end of February. Clinician TBD. We'd also like to welcome junior member Lillian Frenzel as SCDCTA's official Jr/YR representative to the board.

### **Patricia Dingle, Newsletter editor & Website liaison**

Newsletter Designer Ken Maginnis and myself are starting to get into a groove with the design and content of our quarterly magazine "Tracking Up". We are always looking for submissions - articles, artwork, photography, results - which can be sent to [editor@scdcta.com](mailto:editor@scdcta.com). I was deeply honored to win the 2023 USDF award for Best General Interest Article for a GMO with 175-499 members with "Love Thy Equine Professional", and I look forward to continuing to provide quality informative and educational pieces from myself and our members.

### **\*\*\*Upcoming SCDCTA Events\*\*\***

- 2/3/24 - SCDCTA Awards Banquet at Hotel Indigo in Mount Pleasant, SC
- 2/24-25/24 - Low Country Dressage USDF Show, John's Island, SC
- 4/27-28/24 - Springtime Dressage USDF Show, Camden, SC
- 6/28-30/24 - SCDCTA Jr/YR Clinic, Camden, SC

October 2024 - Octoberfest Schooling Show and Championships, Camden, SC

### **USDF Dates to Remember:**

- 1/15-16/24 - USDF Trainer's Conference at High Meadows Farm Loxahatchee, FI
- 1/20-21/24 - Region 3 Jr/YR Clinic w/ Lilo Fore, Atlanta area TBD
- 6/1-2/24 - Region 3 AA Clinic w/ John Kimball, Newberry, FL
- 9/19-22/24 - Region 3 Championships at WEC, Ocala, FI \*\*\*EARLIER DATE\*\*\*

# Congratulations

to our SCDCTA Members!

**Elizabeth Welch** and Baltico BRH  
2023 USDF/US PRE All Breeds Open  
Training Level Reserve Champion

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**Patricia Dingle** and Entre Toi et Moi  
2023 USDF/Arabian All Breeds Open Third  
Level - 3rd place

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**Madison Evans** and Die Furstin  
2023 USDF/Westfalen Verband NA All  
Breeds Sport Horse Breeding Reserve  
Champion 4-years & older Maiden/Yeld  
Mares

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**Carol Freligh**  
2023 USDF Region 3  
Volunteer of the Year

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**Patricia Dingle**  
2023 USDF Best General Interest Article  
for a GMO with 175-499 members

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**Amy Winnen** and D'Artagnan  
2023 USDF Dressage Sport Horse  
Breeding Horse of the Year Champion  
Colts/Geldings of Current Calendar  
Year with a median score of 80.275,  
Made In the Shade USDF Show.  
D'Artagnan is by Don Olymbrio out of  
Whispering Wind P by Windfall,  
handler: Bruce Griffin III

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# Congrats

SCDCTA Members!

**Allison Andrews** and Diamond Bachelor

-1st Place BN CT and Low Score Award  
at Middleton Place schooling show on  
November 4th, on a score of 27.2

-TIP Championships in October:  
6th Place Intro Dressage and  
5th Place in Starter CT



**Allison Andrews** and Apology Accept

Reserve champions Training Level  
Dressage at TIP Championships

**Ken Maginnis** & Raubritter

USEF Silver Stirrup Awards - National -  
Reserve Champion at 3rd Level

USEF Silver Stirrup Awards AA - National -  
Reserve Champion at 3rd Level

USEF Silver Stirrup Awards: Raubritter -  
National - 4th place at 4th Level

USEF Silver Stirrup Awards - Zone 4 -  
Champion at 3rd & 4th Levels

**Patricia Dingle** & WH The Aga Khan

UCSC Britches & Bridles Schooling Show  
Series - Champion 1st Level Adult



pc: Mike Scott



pc: Wonderfully Made



pc: Tom DePuy

# Dressage:

# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SHOULDER-IN



MARIETTA JULIARD

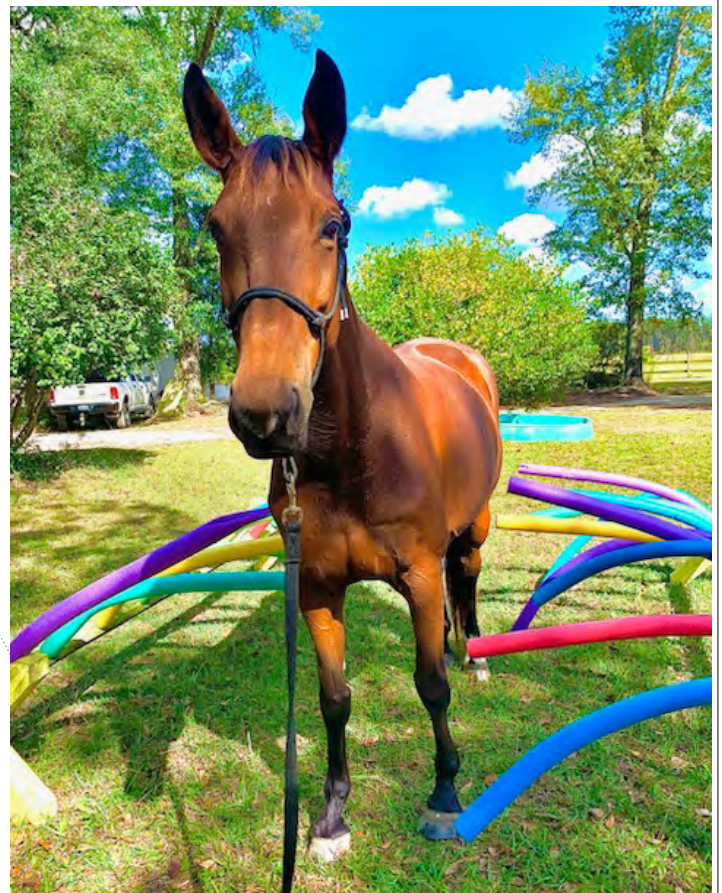
## Tricked you!

This is not really an article on shoulder ins. I just had to get your attention and hope you give this article, which is still very much related to dressage, a chance.

The real title is:

## Did Someone Say Obstacle Training? Get Out of the Twenty Meter Circle and Have Some Fun!

My well-bred mare *Classy* and I work hard – okay, maybe not that hard, but still, we do our best – on our dressage work. With our coach and the occasional show (shout out to the Middleton Schooling Shows, which are a treat for amateur riders like myself) we stay on track, and many of our rides are spent thinking about my inside leg and outside rein. However, the weather is slowly cooling down and the days have gotten shorter. Adult amateurs with full-time jobs like myself detest the time change in the Fall because it usually means less daylight riding time. As the sunlight slips away, so does my motivation to spend too much time in the saddle. For days



like that, I turn to obstacle training: walking through noodles, over the wooden seesaw, the water pool and through a curtain of little flags.



“IT’S CLEAR THAT OBSTACLE TRAINING HAS PROVEN INVALUABLE FOR MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY HORSE.”

All jokes aside, while dressage remains my primary discipline, it's clear that obstacle training has proven invaluable for my relationship with my horse. Just the other day, when a HELICOPTER flew straight OVER us - and I was freaking out inside - Classy seemed to think nothing of it and just stood there quietly as if helicopters fly over us every day. Her training of trusting humans and the world we create kicked in. Or maybe I should have her ears checked.

My friend Faith Williams and her 15-year-old gelding, Trigger, have a harmonious relationship. Trigger, an American Cream draft (a very rare breed), and Faith can often be found on the obstacle course. Trigger wasn't always this calm, though. "He was a handful when I got him ten years ago, which is why I got into natural horsemanship and ground work exercises,"



says Faith. He certainly is a calm cucumber nowadays, but Faith continues to work on obstacle training. "You want to do everything you can on the ground because that translates into the saddle," Faith says.

Catherine Plecenik (Cat), who owns her seven-year-old Trakehner mare Bug, agrees. "I'll admit I always preferred riding to any kind of work on

the ground. I felt like being in the saddle was 'more fun.' This year though, I've grown such an appreciation for in hand work! From long lining to having fun on the obstacle course at Rose Court, I'm having a blast with Bug on the ground. It's so much fun to watch her personality and confidence grow, and the in-hand work is so beneficial to her progress under saddle."



ball, start in the arena on the ground with the lead rope,” Faith advises. “Bring the new object to the horse and let them put their nose on it. With Trigger, I give the verbal command and say ‘I want you to touch it,’ and he knows that means to put his nose on the object. He’s come to understand he can trust the object when I say that.”

A big hit at our barn is the wooden seesaw. I like to lead Classy over it as we walk from her pasture to the barn. Faith and Trigger are at a whole different level: they ride over it, halt on the middle part, and then Faith has Trigger move the seesaw without moving much herself. She leans forward a bit in the saddle, making him lean forward, and the seesaw goes down. Then she leans backward, Trigger following her movement, and the seesaw goes up. “You can fine tune any obstacle by being precise. This enhances the relationship. Trigger loves doing the seesaw!” Faith says.

One obstacle neither Classy nor Trigger appreciate is a small plastic pool. The main reason is probably that it constantly changes location around the barn and that it is sometimes filled with water and other times with balls. Faith and I, therefore, keep looking for the pool, and after a big snort, our ponies are usually reassured, at least in part.

Faith, Cat and I all board our horses at Rose Court Farms, and we are lucky that there are not just three arenas there, but also a nice little obstacle course as well as extensive trails.

We all know horses get started on the ground, no matter the discipline they end up specializing in. Dressage horses spend time being lunged and learn some of the movements in hand before giving it a try under saddle. Yet a lot of amateur riders spend most of their time in the saddle. It’s logical, because most of us have limited time and prefer to spend it riding. But even if your horse is already well trained, obstacle training can benefit your relationship. If your horse can walk over a tarp or through a line of noodles calmly, then surely, they can ride their dressage test without spooking at the flowers at the show! At the very least, doing obstacle work works to our benefit as riders as we realize what our horses are capable of.

“Games and groundwork can be a good way for horse owners to connect and bond with their horses,” says local trainer Amelia Main. “Not all work needs to be done from the saddle. Watching the horse move and react to your aids can also help measure their well being, such as irregular gait patterns or changes in their topline.”

### **How to start**

How you approach something new and how much time you take depends on the horse, but overall, it’s all about baby steps. “Whatever the obstacle is, whether it’s a noodle or a tarp or a



"My advice to anyone wanting to spend more time on the ground would be to find a quality trainer," Cat says. "It seems like [obstacle training] should be easy, but so much goes into how you're handling your horse. Shout out to the amazing Amelia Main for giving Bug and I the confidence to have fun on the ground together and enjoy the journey!"

### Places to go

For those located around the Charleston area, here are a few suggestions of places you might consider visiting (in between shows, of course)! Rose Court Farms in Summerville is a privately-owned barn where anyone is welcome to trailer in and use the trails or obstacle course for a \$25 fee. Gibbes Farms



in Saint Matthews, SC, has a large cross-country course and trails you can explore for \$35. It is a favorite among the cross-country riders but is also fun to visit for anyone who would like to trot through

their water jumps or work on their twenty-meter circles around the logs. For obstacle training, Almost Heaven Stables, run by Valeria Beard, in Warrenton, SC, has three major obstacle courses and many trails. They charge \$30 for a day and you simply need to call ahead if you'd like to visit. Finally, for a trip to the beach, there is Hunting Island, where for \$25 you can go any day between December and February.

What about you? Do you have a fun and challenging obstacle you'd like to share with us, or do you know of any fun farms and places to visit in South Carolina that you could share? Please send pictures and information to [editor@scdcta.com](mailto:editor@scdcta.com)! This magazine wants to hear more from you, the members!

A special thanks to Faith and Cat for sharing their thoughts, and to Mary Cutts for the pictures! Mary, her draft Mac and pony Half Pint can often be found having fun on the obstacle course and exploring the Nexton neighborhood that is right next to Rose Court Farms. 🐾



# FINDING AN EQUINE

**Trisha Dingle**  
Egyptian Rose Sport Horses

**As** a conclusion to the series "Finding An Equine Professional", this month we will discuss finding a suitable living arrangement for your horse. Regardless of your chosen discipline, or whether or not you require training/instruction at your new barn, your horse's living accommodations can have a huge impact on his performance and overall health. Unfortunately in this day and age quality boarding facilities are disappearing quicker than the Dodo bird, but by being patient and doing your homework it is possible to find a facility that meets most if not all of your and your horse's needs, where you both can find peace and happiness.

Just like with having to search for a new health care professional and equine educator, it can be a daunting task when you are in the market for somewhere new for your horse to live, especially if you are on a tight budget. If you require a situation where either

you, your horse, or both of you will be in full time training, you can follow the advice in our September Newsletter ("Finding an Equine Professional Part 2 - Equine Educators), but also incorporate some of the questions and suggestions from this one. This article will primarily focus on those horse owners who are looking for primarily a boarding facility that does not include training or lessons.

Know What You Want (make a list!)

Just like with finding an EP, the first step is to start brainstorming and make some lists! Here are some questions to ask yourself, and to include on your "What My Horse & I Want" list:

“...If you are currently boarding at a facility, identify what you enjoy about it as well as what you would change if you could...”

- 1.** What are your necessities? If you could create the perfect situation for you and your horse, what would it be? Be specific - do you require a certain nutritional program, certain turnout situation (full time, no turnout, herd dynamic or single horse turnout?), or certain riding areas? Do you prefer larger active barns or a quieter more private facility? Will you want to have your current EPs (instructor, farrier, vet) come to your new barn to work with you and your horse? What about extras - perhaps a climate controlled tack room, a recreation area, washer/dryer, indoor bathrooms? What type of a grooming/tacking situation would you like, do you want access to hot water and what type of



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bathing area? Would you prefer the owner/manager or some equine professional to be living on sight? What discipline do you ride and do you want a discipline specific facility or are you happy sharing a barn with a variety of horse people? Do you need full care, partial care, or self care?

**2.**

If you are currently boarding at a facility, identify what you enjoy about it as well as what you would change if you could.

**3.**

What is the maximum time/distance you are willing to travel to a facility?

**4.**

What is your budget? Its ok if this list is long - remember this is your "dream facility" and we will gradually narrow it down to "Needs", and "Can't Live Without" that will help you choose the right boarding barn.

Narrow it down -  
**Your "Needs" List**

From your first dream facility "want" list, start narrowing it down to a second list - these are going to be the non-negotiable qualities of a facility that will make you

and your horse happiest. Keep in mind whether or not your horse has any vices or health care needs, as these are important factors when finding the right facility. Be sure to be honest with yourself - if your horse is a cribber then a facility with non-wood fencing or electric along the fence line will be your best option. If you have a horse with severe bug allergies, then somewhere with run-in sheds or the option to come into the barn during prime insect hours will be a plus. Try to keep



# 3

this list to only 5 or 6 items - remember that the more particular you are, the harder it will be to find the right match, and in many cases what we think is “non-negotiable” actually can be compromised on to make all parties happy.

consider a “priority”, but identifying the one item that is a no-compromise-cannot-live-without will greatly help you when it comes down to making a final decision.

### **Next Step is to do your homework!**

Many of the same techniques we discussed in the last two issues on finding a health care provider or equine professional can be used for finding a boarding facility. A refresher of what these are can be found in the box at the end of this article. But in addition to those, here are

wouldn't recommend and can help you avoid a bad situation. Talk to your riding instructor, trainer, or current barn owner/manager (this is assuming you are leaving the barn on good terms such as moving out of town, needing a facility closer to where you currently live, becoming a first time horse owner, etc). Of course this will all be subjective, but if you trust the people making the recommendations and they know you and your horse well, they can be a valuable resource.

### **•Ask around at shows, rides, equine events**

If you compete, trail ride, or partake in other equine events, ask fellow riders where they board and if they could suggest any barns. You may even see a trainer whose disposition and methods you admire, or who's students are enjoying themselves, and ask them if they happen to board at their facility. These may be strangers or only casual acquaintances who don't know you or your horse well, but they can add to your list of facilities to take a look at.

### **•Identify one “Can't Live Without” item**

From your “Needs” list, identify the number one “must have” for you in a boarding facility. Is it a certain amount of turnout, a safe location to ride, driving distance from your house? There may be a number of issues you

a few more suggestions for researching a suitable barn:

### **• Talk to people you know**

If you are currently boarding, training, or taking lessons at a barn, ask your fellow barn mates for recommendations. They may have boarded somewhere previously that wasn't suited to their needs but might be the perfect situation for you. Or they may have left a barn that they



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• **Consult websites and social media**

From your own research and suggestions from friends and acquaintances, you can start researching facilities from the comfort of your own home on your computer or phone. While you shouldn't necessarily "judge a book by its cover", checking out websites, Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, etc for the farms

on your list can give you an idea of each situation. Farms with a strong online presence can provide photos of their facility as well as photos that show the condition of the horses in their care and happy clients. Many websites and FB pages will also have recommendations from current and former clients.



• **Initial Contact**

Once you have narrowed down your list of facilities, its time to make initial contact. Call or email the owner/ manager, briefly explain what you are looking for, ask if they are taking on new clients and if so can you schedule an

appointment to speak with them. NEVER call outside of "normal business hours" - despite being a lifelong horse person I consider "normal" to be 9am-5pm, unless stated otherwise on the farm's website. Do not text, unless on their webpage or social media account they specifically state that this is

how they wish to be contacted (and again only do so during normal business hours).

While I prefer a phone call or text, many owners/managers (especially the younger generations) are more active on social media and may be more likely to check their FB messenger more often than email, so that can be another option - again its best to see if the farm has their preferred

form of contact listed anywhere on the website or social media account, and if you choose the latter option its always best to go directly through their business page rather than personal page.

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### Questions to ask:

Whether it is on the phone, via computer, or an in person meeting, here are some questions to ask (and be sure to have your "Needs" list with you so that you can be clear to the barn owner/manager what you are looking for):

#### **Is the barn currently taking on new boarders?**

- What costs are involved (all inclusive board or are things like blanketing, holding for farrier, etc. extra charges)? What type of payment is accepted and when is it due?

#### **•What kind of liability insurance does the farm carry?**

**Are you required to use the Barn's professionals** (vet, farrier, etc) or can you bring in your own? If having your instructor/trainer come to you for lessons is on your "Needs" list, ask if the barn allows that and what requirements they may have: (does the EP need to have their own liability insurance, are there certain times of day when you can use the arena, are people other than you allowed to ride your horse at their farm?)

•If you are not already at the barn when having this discussion, now is a good time to ask any questions about the facility that you haven't learned through your



“Never call outside of “normal business hours”... consider “normal” to be 9am-5pm, unless stated otherwise on the farm’s website”



research - type of fencing & turnout provided, feeding times and program, number and sizes of any arenas (this is when you'll want your "Needs" list available).

#### •Ask about the current dynamics of the barn

- are there many boarders or few; are they juniors, older, or a mix; what breeds and types of riding are represented?

• It may not seem like a big deal, but explain to the owner/manager what your horse's breed, size, and disposition is, and if they feel your horse would fit in. I had a friend board her very high energy, very accident prone Half-Arabian saddle seat horse at a primarily stock horse pleasure/trail riding facility - the owner/employees at the farm had a hard time understanding and handling a horse that, while well-trained and mannered, was such high energy, and because they didn't understand her riding discipline they considered a lot of what she was doing and equipment being used to be "abusive" - needless to say that situation did not last long.

#### •Arrange a meeting

After the initial contact, if the barn sounds like a possible fit, it's time to check it out in person. Schedule an appointment to visit the farm - if they have a waiting list it's still a good idea to visit, even if its to mark it off on your list as a future boarding barn. Its always a good idea to plan to be to your appointment a few minutes early and never late, and \*always\* respect the owner/manager's time.

#### Red Flags

- Multiple horses underweight/poor condition
- Disorganized/messy barn
- Abusive behavior by clients and/or staff being tolerated by the owner/manager
- Fencing or equipment in disrepair or repaired hastily/unsafely
- Filthy water troughs/buckets (to the extreme)
- Signs of stalls not being cleaned daily
- Obvious safety hazards - i.e. sharp objects in horse's path, holes, barbed wire, exposed electrical wires/outlets, smoking in the barn
- Trust your gut! Even if you are new to horses, if you just don't get a warm, fuzzy feeling about a barn or feel uncomfortable around the clients or staff, then pass and move on to somewhere else.

Looking for a new place for your horse to live can actually be a fun task, as long as you are prepared. And you don't have to do it alone - when going to visit barns bring a friend along and make a day of it! Your friend doesn't even have to have horse experience - in fact many non-equestrians are better at noticing red flags and picking up on the general atmosphere than horse people. By doing just a bit of research and entering into the process prepared, you have a great chance at success in finding just the right match for you and your horse. Happy hunting! 🐾

6

#### RESOURCES FOR FINDING A NEW BOARDING FACILITY

- Ask your current Equine Professional or barn owner/manager for a recommendation
- Ask your health care provider for a recommendation
- Ask friends/respected horsemen in the area
- Tack & Feed Store Referrals
- Association & Horse Council Referrals
- Online Referrals

# DEEP ROOTS

in SC Equestrian Community

# SPUR SPONSORSHIP

*MadKat Dressage - Seignious & Smith*

**Lisa Hinkle**, SCDCTA Secretary

## MadKat Dressage:

Highlighting Overlooked Horses

For MadKat Dressage, the special horses and people in business owner Kathryn Butt's life are what drove her to begin offering sponsorships at SCDCTA shows, with an emphasis on highlighting certain dressage mounts that may differ from the norms of dressage. The GMO's longest-running sponsor, MadKat Dressage for years has sponsored a Thoroughbred Incentive Program (TIP) award for top-scoring off-track Thoroughbreds (OTTBs) at all SCDCTA shows, along with National Dressage Pony Cup (NDPC) classes to recognize SC's dressage ponies, which Butt calls "small but mighty warriors."

Kathryn and her family have been fixtures in the South Carolina equestrian community since her time as a junior rider, which included several years working out of Kiawah River

Stables, owned by Laurence Stoney after five years working for Danish Olympian Bent Jensen. MadKat

Dressage—named for Kathryn herself (the "Kat" portion of the name) and the daughter of a silent sponsor (Madeline, the "Mad" portion) who trained alongside Kathryn in dressage under her mother, Sandra Bussey—has existed since 2007 and been an operating business since 2012. One of MadKat Dressage's distinguishing features is its ongoing promotion of youth riders in dressage. In fact, Kathryn is the SCDCTA junior/young rider coordinator.

"We use SCDCTA to help educate youth riders in the sport of dressage and try to help springboard any who are interested into the High Performance ranks of dressage and the USEF Pipeline program," Kathryn explains.

The SCDCTA Annual Youth Clinic is the centerpiece of the junior program. Modeled on Lendon Gray's Emerging Dressage Athlete Program, the clinic brings to SC clinicians that have come through the USEF youth pipeline and are able to talk to the kids about that program, juggling riding and school, and the dedication required to do so.



### EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is the first in an occasional series highlighting the businesses and individuals that have supported SCDCTA via sponsorship over the years. Watch for other featured sponsors in future issues! To learn more about sponsorship opportunities with SCDCTA, please contact Tierney Boyd [tierney@scdcta.com](mailto:tierney@scdcta.com)

## MadKat Dressage: continued

"Our passion is helping grass roots riders fulfill their maximum potential and educate them on the workings of our national federations and the international breadth of our sport," Kathryn tells Tracking Up. "MadKat Dressage stands ready to be your partner in High Performance!"

And that work with juniors inevitably led to work with ponies, hence the ongoing sponsorship of NDPC classes at SCDCTA's recognized dressage shows.



"We've been blessed with many talented ponies in our lives, and we wanted to honor them while

helping people that ride ponies feel proud of their partners," Kathryn says. "There tends to be a stigma in dressage in America that bigger horses are better, and that's simply not the case! Furthermore, the beginnings of our sport are children and ponies. We want to encourage that."

She also notes that there seems to be an overall lack of good dressage ponies readily available in the US on which children can develop a good seat and learn shoulder-in, haunches-in, etc. Having these smaller dressage mounts available to help young riders gain solid, classical equitation is important, and can help promote the pipeline into FEI ranks for junior dressage enthusiasts. MadKat Dressage hopes that the NDPC sponsorships can help fill the gap locally and encourage more use of ponies in dressage to be the beginning

steppingstone for kids and parents.

"NDPC is a fabulous organization with amazing prizes, and we enjoying helping to bring that into SCDCTA," she adds.

Regarding the TIP awards, Kathryn points to the many athletic OTTBs she and her mother have ridden over the years as the inspiration for that sponsorship.



"Many times, OTTBs get overlooked or end up in poor situations," she says. "From the 'failed' 2yo to the retired 8yo war horse, these creatures are bred to be athletes and deserve recognition in the sport of dressage."

She adds that many riders and trainers mistakenly believe that OTTBs are just not meant to do dressage without a cross country course attached. As a result, straight dressage OTTBs are few and far between; MadKat Dressage wants to make sure that as many as possible get recognition through the TIP award.

"Simply put, we sponsor what we love and identify with," Kathryn told Tracking Up.

And sponsorship with SCDCTA again ties into MadKat Dressage's deep familial roots in the South Carolina dressage community. Kathryn's grandfather, Evan Bussey Jr. was one of the drafters of the original SCDCTA bylaws and an early SCDCTA board member. Both Kathryn and her mother grew up taking part in the GMO and its activities and continue to believe strongly in the governance of a GMO under US national federations as an important tool to help keep horses and riders safe. And with the advent of social media, sponsorships are a way that local businesses can promote facets of the equestrian community they are part of, highlighting people and horses that they want to spotlight or bring awareness too. And of course,

"everyone loves smiling faces with big ribbons," Kathryn concludes.

Contact Kathryn at [klb317@gmail.com](mailto:klb317@gmail.com) to learn more about MadKat Dressage and the SCDCTA junior program. 🐾

# DEEP ROOTS

in SC Equestrian Community

# SPUR SPONSORSHIP

## Seignious and Smith

Building, supporting community connections

"Stubbornly different" real estate agents Terri Seignious and Ashley Smith Willis of Seignious and Smith believe community is important

and do their best to build ties within the equestrian community, whether by helping Lowcountry equestrians find the perfect home farm or by highlighting facets of the equestrian community that are especially important to them and their riding peers.

Seignious and Smith is one of SCDCTA's most prolific sponsors and has been for several years. Every recognized show has featured awards and classes they have sponsored, including high-score awards, musical freestyles, and many

other classes. They also sponsor classes with the annual schooling championships, support the annual junior clinic, and always donate beautiful items to the annual silent

auction fundraiser. Terri and Ashley, both Certified Equestrian Property Specialists with years of real estate experience, formed their partnership in 2021 to sell real estate together, specializing in horse farms, though they sell all types of properties. Both partners are competing members of the USDF and have boarded, owned, and trained locally in the South Carolina Lowcountry for decades.

Differentiating one real estate agent's service from among the approximately 7,500 in the greater Charleston area can be challenging. Ashley describes Seignious and Smith as "stubbornly different," using preparation, practice, and experience to shine in business in just the same way a horse/rider team works to shine and stand out from the crowd in the show ring.

"Both being lifetime and local equestrians, our knowledge is a great tool for buyers and sellers alike," Ashley tells Tracking Up. "[Our equestrian property certifications], combined with our experience allows us to market properties effectively and help buyers coming to the Lowcountry make good decisions about what type of land to invest in. Also, we are horse girls — so you know we will go to bat for our clients!"



**SEIGNIOUS & SMITH**  
Akers Ellis Real Estate

Seignious and Smith: continued

The pair have sold more than \$28 million in equestrian-related properties since June 2021.

Ashley also notes that the Lowcountry equestrian community - like many around the US - faces an ongoing battle to avoid losing horse-friendly properties to development. Seignious and Smith, therefore, takes the idea of creating farms and equestrian opportunities very seriously; this helps to enhance and strengthen the community. In the past four years, she says, Seignious and Smith clients have installed new professional riding rings, and some have even created new boarding facilities for the community, "something we are really proud of!"

And sponsorship with SCDCTA ties right into that work. Both Ashley and Terri believe it's important to support their local equestrian community and the sports in which they enjoy competing themselves. Keeping dressage alive and fun for locals is their ongoing goal.

"We go back to keeping our small equestrian community engaged and able to enjoy horsemanship of all kinds locally," Ashley explains. "Charleston has a smaller equestrian community, and participation in local shows is paramount to keeping the potential for shows alive. Not everyone is able to travel to Aiken, Tryon, etc. By providing extra awards and prizes we hope to be a small factor in continued engagement and show success!"

Seignious and Smith has always been willing to sponsor any awards or classes, depending on what a particular show has open, what is needed, and what type of feedback they hear while attending horse shows. A newly added sponsorship in 2023 is the wildly popular Vintage Award for riders over 50, modeled

on the USDF vintage award, including age criteria.

"Because I am a vintage rider (over 65), I wanted to recognize older riders that are still training,

competing and enjoying their horses," Ashley tells Tracking Up. "It's not quite as easy as it was when we were all so much younger, but it's still our passion."

In addition to a Vintage Award offered at each show, Seignious and Smith sponsors a year-end award for the top-scoring older rider. And next year, the pair reports, they hope to add a fun junior award "for the kids who work so hard to be at these shows."

"We truly hope that the offering of a fun, different, ribbon, year-end award, or extra prize helps to keep participation up and keep our riders excited about the next show," Ashley adds.

All these sponsorships help to create fellowship and trust within the equestrian community. Ashley says referrals for the business' aid in buying and selling all types of real estate often come directly from the tight-knit equestrian community, something she calls "our greatest compliment." This is particularly true for clients seeking farm properties, however.

"I think those of us who know what it is like to hitch up before daylight, work all day, sweat your booty off, and do it in white pants know that we aren't scared of hard work," Ashley says. 🐾

Learn more about Seignious and Smith by visiting their Facebook page:

[facebook.com/seigniousandsmith](https://facebook.com/seigniousandsmith)



# Moving

# FORWARD

An *Adult Amateur's* Experience  
with the  
*Stephen Hayes* Clinic

## DR ROBIN FUCHS

On the Friday and Saturday prior to the SCDCTA Oktoberfest schooling show championships, our fantastic SCDCTA officials organized a clinic with the British/USA FEI rider, Stephen Hayes.



At the risk of showing my naivety in regards to the current standings in the dressage world, I had not heard of Stephen prior to seeing the sign-up for this clinic. None the less, I thought getting some fresh insight on my new dressage horse's (Rada, a 13-year-old, Andalusian gelding) propensity to spook at any and everything in or outside of a dressage arena while off property could be helpful. I was worried, however, that

such a high-level dressage rider may have an aversion to having little-old-me, a current training level, adult amateur, take up room in their clinic. In the end, I decided riding on only Saturday would be the best way to receive some assistance with Rada and my current issues, but without tiring him out prior to the show on Sunday.

I arrived to the grounds the morning of the second day of the clinic and immediately

Rada was convinced that this was the place of his death. He was spooking at everything from the stall down to the covered arena and after convincing him that the arena did not hold his inevitable doom, we were able to start our clinic ride. Stephen began by noting that Rada was very much behind my leg as he was likely expecting a ghost (I mean I know it was the Oktoberfest school show, but come on Rada) to manifest itself at any moment. Stephen

“...immediately Rada was convinced that this was the place of his death.”

suggested to get him trotting and moving with forward intention. Unfortunately, this proved quite difficult with Rada poised to bolt at the slightest provocation. At this point, Stephen recommended that, while we were still warming up, to actually forget

cantering early in our warm-up helped Rada loosen up and decrease tension.

Following this canter work, including many canter-trot-canter transitions to help further with Rada's longitudinal suppleness, we went to work on lateral suppleness. We started at a halt and only worked on loosening up Rada's poll with small amounts of flexion and counter-flexion. Once we had that concept down, we did it at a walk and subsequently trot. Stephen had us go large around the arena counter-flexing down the long sides, going deep into the corners with correct flexion, and then going straight on the short sides. After several laps either direction with this exercise, Rada has loosened significantly and was starting to feel freer in his movement.

Stephen was not done here though with helping Rada to release tension. We worked on leg-yield to shoulder-in exercises each way for more lateral suppleness throughout Rada's entire body. Following this we went back into canter with more canter-trot-canter transitions. I cannot stress enough the magic that was the first few strides of trot following all of this. Rada was freely moving in front of my

leg and oh-so-light in the bridle. It was truly a beautiful feeling.

Stephen went on to explain that after rhythm on the dressage training pyramid is suppleness, making it a highly important aspect of all of our training. He said that it is up to riders to help horses become more supple and, subsequently, learn that they are more comfortable and happier, moving in this way. We, as riders, should always be looking to improve our horse's physical and mental well-being and remembering that both of those things are connected; thus, when we work on body relaxation, the mind can relax, and vice versa. By focusing on suppleness and freely moving forward, we could also move past the terrifying ghosts Rada was certain were auditing the clinic in the arena. I have grown as a horse woman from working with Stephen even this one time and will be first in line to ride with him again if/when he returns to our corner of the world. I truly encourage all SCDCTA members, to, if not participate in the clinic, attend as an auditor as he has a great deal to teach. 🐾

about the trot for a bit and go into canter. The thought was the canter would help to create longitudinal suppleness in Rada decreasing his tension and allowing him to move more freely forward. Due to previous training, I had always felt that you warm up walk, then trot, then canter; thus, with skepticism, I gave this suggestion a try. I found, with true amazement, that



# OKTOBERFEST

## SCHOOLING SHOW CHAMPIONSHIPS



pic: Mike Scott



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For Oktoberfest Schooling Show  
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Thank-you to our  
wonderful Sponsors!

[SCDCTA Oktoberfest page link](#)

# My Experience at GAIG/USDF REGION 3 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ocala, Florida

## McKenna Sykora

Qualifying for your first Regionals can be a hassle: getting all the right scores, on all the right tests, all in the right time. But let me tell you, it is worth it! Because this was my first Regionals, I needed a lot of help to get where I was going. I had no idea what shows to go to, or what scores I needed, or how many I needed, or anything really. I would have to say that most of the credit for me making it to Regionals would have to go to my coach, Sandra Bussey-Turner of MadKat Dressage. My mother and I found Sandy about two years ago and I've been training with her since then. In that time, I have come so much farther than I thought I even could! The first year of working with Ms. Sandy was tough. I'm not the easiest kid to work with, nor did I even understand the whole going out and showing thing. Eventually though, after some hard work and rough moments, we got into a rhythm of things and we made it all the way from a little kid on a farm in the middle of nowhere to Regional Championships. Special thanks to my coach, Ms. Sandy, for all the hard work she put into helping me be the best rider I can be.

I brought two horses to Regionals with me, which was fun but not without its own amount of difficulty, as you would expect when you bring more than one horse to a show, especially one as big as Regionals. We were in the tent stabling, so I can see how some people may not like that.

It isn't as nice as a barn, but for my horses it was convenient and worked very well for our horses. They could see other horses around them and have friends keeping them company. One of my horses in particular needs that, as she becomes quite a nervous wreck when she

doesn't have anyone around her in new places. Finding stabling for the humans in our party wasn't any trouble as there were plenty of hotels nearby. One of my teammates did mention that staying in their trailer on the facility was much more expensive than they expected. It would have been much better to stay on property with your horses to keep an eye on them and be right there in case something happened, but unfortunately, the price inhibited them



## REGION 3 CHAMPIONSHIPS

**McKenna Sykora**

from doing so. Finding convenient parking for our trailer was no trouble, but we did come to the show a little earlier in the week, so that may have helped. The facility overall was very large and spaced out, which was a little inconvenient. It took almost ten minutes to get to the arenas, and the ride times for all days did not give us a lot of time between. Considering how many people were showing, I think the size of the venue was suitable and most likely couldn't have been much smaller than it was, just maybe better planned out.



The first day at Regionals we did some warmup classes to prepare for the show ahead. With Samira, my 16.2 hand, 17 year old, Westfalen mare, we did the Second Level Test 1. We won first place with a 65.5% and we were very happy with that ride since we have just started moving up into second level. As for Poptart, my 14.1 hand, 12 year old, German Riding Pony mare, we rode the First Level Test 1. My coach and I felt the scoring for Poptart's first ride was not very accurate. She has gotten much higher scores with much lower quality rides than that one. It was unfortunate, but she still placed third in that class none the less.

The show itself was very large with many riders in many different levels. I had the opportunity to observe some rides that were close to my level, as well as some very skilled riders. Because I am a visual learner, I quite enjoyed watching the higher level riders. Observing skilled riders up close was a good learning opportunity for me as well as listening to some of the trainers that were there working with their clients.

The second day of Regionals was First Level Championships for both of my horses. I've never been judged by two people at once, so I thought that was quite interesting, especially with the

## REGION 3 CHAMPIONSHIPS

McKenna Sykora



opposing scores and different comments. We unfortunately did not place very well in First Level, but I was happy with the rides and the girls tried their hardest.

Both my rides were early that day so we had time in the afternoon to go shop at all the vendors. There were many shops with all sorts of fun stuff and good food. I also had the opportunity to watch the Junior Prix St George which was very informative and enjoyable. I am working on some of the elements in that test at home, and it was nice to observe different rides on the same movements and the different ways they each rode. Watching some of the Grand Prix rides was also fun. I've always enjoyed watching other riders. I feel it helps me to learn from other's accomplishments and mistakes.

The third and last day at Regionals was for sure the most exiting. The last day was Training Level Championships for both horses and Dressage Seat Equitation on Samira. Every ride was very close with little more than an hour in between rides, so there wasn't much preparation time or cool down time for the horses. For Training Level Championships, I placed sixth and seventh respectively on Poptart with a 70.2%, and Samira with a 70.0%. I was very pleased with that. In the Dressage Seat Semi Finals on Samira, I received an 80.0% and was Reserved Champion! Unfortunately I missed the awards ceremony. I had to leave early to get on Poptart for her Training Level Championship class, which was very disappointing. This was my first Regional Finals and I have never been to an awards presentation. My mom and I wanted pictures with the Judges and Regionals banner, but unfortunately they wouldn't allow us to tag in after another awards group.



Overall I really enjoyed going to Regionals. I think that it was a great opportunity for me and I will hopefully be returning! Other than a few minor inconveniences, I had a successful time at regionals. Both horses won a Wild Card invitation to the US Dressage Finals, and Samira and I will be going to the US Dressage Festival of Champions next year! For my first Regional Championships, lots of learning, lots of accomplishments, lots of new experiences, and lots of fun!

McKenna

# STEPHEN HAYES CLINIC

**Lillian Frenzel**

This October, I had the privilege of riding in the 2023 SCDCTA Adult Amateur clinic with British FEI rider Stephen Hayes. My primary horse, Reina, was a little sore, so I ended up taking our 3 year old, Merlin. He stepped up and was perfectly behaved for the whole clinic! One of the things that Stephen really helped us improve upon was my geometry and accuracy. First, we established the length of the side of the arena and the spacing between the letters. 20 meters from one corner to the other on the short sides of the arena and 60 meters from one corner to the other on the on the long sides. 5 meters from to corner to the quarter line, quarter line to centerline, centerline to next quarter line, and quarter line to the last corner. 10 meters from quarter line to quarter line. 10 meters from the corner to A, 10 meters to the other corner. 10 meters from the corner to C, 10 meters to the other corner. 6 meters from the Corner to H, M, K, and F. 12 meters from K to V, V to E, E to S, S to H, M to R, R to B, B to P, and P to F. 6 meters from A to D and G to C. 12 meters from D to L, L to X, C to I, and I to G. I knew most of this academically, but I didn't know how to apply it!

Then we began to work on circles. If it's 18 meters from A to L, then a 20 meter circle should go 2 meters beyond L, not at or before L. Similarly, a 20 meter circle preformed at C should extend slightly beyond I. I was making both of these circles far too small! One preformed at E or B should be 2 meters before L and I, not at or beyond L or I. Here, I was making them too large. The loops of a serpentine should follow the same rules. Circles and serpentines should not extend into the corners. 15 meter circles should extend 2.5 meters beyond each quarter line when preformed at A or C and they should be 3 meters within L and I. When preformed at S, E, V, R, B, and P, they should extend to the far quarter line. One preformed at S should be ridden as slightly less than halfway to the H-G line and slightly less than halfway to E-B, One ridden at E should extend slightly less than halfway to S-R and V-P, etc, etc.. I was having an exceptionally difficult time



# STEPHEN HAYES CLINIC

**Lillian Frenzel**

visualizing how large 15 meters was exactly. 10 meter circles at A and C should extend to each quarter line and a meter under the midpoint between D and L or I and G. 10 meter circles at all other letters should touch the centerline exactly. They should be just under halfway to the letter next to them for V, E, S, R, B, and P. For H, M, K, and F the circle should be slightly within the line of the corner and slightly less than halfway to the next letter. I have a habit of making mine closer to 8 meters! We also worked on maintaining straightness on diagonal lines. We



pc: Megan Frenzel

established that the turn onto a diagonal line should be slightly before the letter it starts at and should end with the horse's head 2-3 meters before the letter. I both start and end these lines too early. I learned a ton during this clinic! By breaking the arena down into a mathematically ruled graph, Stephen was able to help me better understand how most figures should be ridden.

*Lillian*

# 2023-024 EVENT CALENDAR

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## December SCDCTA Events

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**17th** SC Eventing Academy & Dressage TOC  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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## January SCDCTA Events

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**10th** Dressage & CT Schooling Show  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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**14th** Winter Combined Test  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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**31st** Dressage & CT Schooling Show  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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## February SCDCTA Events

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**18th** Eventing Academy Schooling Horse Trials  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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**28th** Dressage & CT Schooling Show  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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## March SCDCTA Events

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**10th** Eventing Academy Schooling Horse Trials  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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**27th** Dressage & CT Schooling Show  
Stable View, Aiken, SC

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For complete Calendar of Events and links to specific shows,  
please visit our website [scdcta.com/calendar.html](https://scdcta.com/calendar.html)

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