

2015 Officers

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President's Message Susan Price

To say I have had a rough couple of months would be a bit of an understatement. Not only did I break my elbow in May from a fall from my young horse, but very recently I lost Cowboy, the horse of my heart, very unexpectedly. I usually try to write a cheerful and upbeat Presidents message, but in truth I feel neither cheerful or upbeat. So I am going to use this months Presidents Message to write a tribute to my beautiful boy that was taken far too soon.

I truly believe that it was serendipity that brought Cowboy into my life, and his effect on it was truly profound. He was only 15.2 hands, everyone said he was far too short for me. I was cautioned that he had less than perfect conformation for a dressage horse. Yet I was drawn to his sale ad and could not get him out of my mind. This was in the days before youtube and instant videos so I had to drive to Georgia to see him in person. What I found was a horse tied up and waiting for me with crabby ears. His owner said he always stood that way (his owner was right, he always stood with his ears back). Although I knew practically nothing about dressage, when she rode him, I knew that he was a much better mover than anyone would have suspected from his pictures. She rode him and rode him so much that by the time I got on, he was so tired I could barely get him to move, which most people might take as a bad sign. Not me, I just knew he was special. I could not get him out of my mind.

He came to live with me in July of 2001. I am not proud of this, and I am still by no means skinny, but at the time I was very heavy. Actually I was downright fat. But I wanted to be the best rider I could be for him. I didn't want to hurt him by being too heavy for him to carry. So he inspired me to do what I had not been able to do my entire life. Because of Cowboy, through diet and exercise, I lost almost 100 lbs and have been able to keep the majority of that off for 15+ years.

In my mind I think my partnership with him was always perfect sunshine and roses. In reality, he was a green horse and I was a green rider and it was a steep learning curve. He had a short, thick neck that made getting round and on the bit a struggle. I couldn't get him to canter at all when I first got him. And when I did, it was always on the wrong lead. Later in life he was a cantering fool, and I just had to think canter and he would pick it up. Lateral work did not come easily to him but when I finally learned how to ask properly, he picked it up quickly. The trot lengthening eluded us to the end. He taught me so much, and he never said no. He tried no matter how hard something was for him to do.

(continued on page 2)



Susan and Cowboy

President's message (cont'd from page 1)

By nature, I am pretty shy. I would never go out and join a club with a bunch of people I didn't know. Because of Cowboy I joined this club so that I could ride and learn from the top clinicians that we have always brought in. And by joining this club I have made wonderful friends and been active and involved with planning events, and even overcome my crippling fear of public speaking.

Cowboy is also responsible for us buying property and building our dream farm. We knew eventually he would earn his retirement, and we wanted to be sure we could provide for him when that time came. Cowboy is the reason we have the land that allowed us to collect our other horses.

Cowboy was supposed to live a long, happy life of leisure and do nothing but decorate my pasture and let me spoil him. But sadly, that was not to be. Friday, June 5 my husband noticed as he was leaving for work that Cowboy was lying down. The vet came and treated him for what we thought was a mild colic. By mid afternoon there was no improvement and on the advice of our vet, we rushed him to UT. On ultra-sound they diagnosed him with a strangulated lipoma (a fatty tumor that is normally innocuous but occasionally will wrap itself around the small intestine and cut off blood supply). Surgery was not a good option and has a poor prognosis. In hopes of a miracle and a wrong diagnosis, they put him on fluids and kept him comfortable overnight. But there was no miracle. His condition deteriorated overnight. We went Saturday morning to say our final goodbyes to this magnificent animal that has changed me forever. He was 21. I am so grateful to have had the privilege of spending the last 15 years with him.

It is my sincere hope that each of you will have a horse in your life as special to you as my Cowboy was to me.

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard" Winnie the Poo

CDCTS MEETING MINUTES Date: 06/09/2015

I. Call to order

Vice President Kathy Ridenour called to order the regular meeting of the CDCTS Board at 7:01 pm on June 9, 2015 at Puleo's Grille, 260 N. Peters Road, Knoxville 37923.

II. Roll call

Vice President Ridenour conducted a roll call. The following Board members were present: Kathy Ridenour, Diane Carlson, Melissa McKenzie, Rita Dunn, Jean Sullivan and Jennifer Bolen. The following Board members were absent: Susan Price, Julie Noe, and Holly Ratcliff. There was a quorum. The following CDCTS members were in attendance: Dave McAdoo, Charlie and Carol Grau, Mike Sullivan, Sue Cain, Gwen Hilla, Mary and Chuck Sivley, Carol Mitchell, Pat Sandlin, Christina Cardenes, Valerie Cheatham, Jeannie Baggett, Shaelyn Baggett, and Carolyn Ordahl.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Minutes were taken from the latest edition of *The Crossing*, the society's newsletter, as no hard copies were available. Motion to approve the minutes: Gwen Hilla; seconded by Carol Grau. The minutes were approved as read.

IV. Old Business.

Treasurer's Report. Monthly expenditures and income were reported. Still awaiting final costs from the JJ Tate Clinic; final costing will be presented next month. Report approved by Jean Sullivan. Seconded by Rita Dunn.

JJ Tate Clinic. All who attended agreed it was an excellent clinic. Recommendation from the group was to bring her back again. Motion to research next available date for another JJ Tate clinic and provide the Board with that information for the next meeting: Carol Grau. Seconded by Gwen Hilla. Approved.

Dressage Clinics: Peter Dove Clinic update presented by Jennifer Bolen. He is the author of *Dressage Masters*. His clinic will be focused on how to ride the dressage test successfully. His dates and fees are to be determined (TBD), with an open window in August-September.

Jeremy Steinburg Clinic. He has been the USDF Youth Coach for many years. Dates TBD for spring of 2016. His calendar for 2016 opens in September/October 2015. Costs will include his airfare. Based on 8—11 riders, the costs are estimated to be \$180 per rider.

Eventing Clinics: Holly Hudspeth Clinic update presented by Shaelyn Baggett. Thus far, the clinic dates will be between August 29-30 and September 19-20. Venue TBD, possibly River Glen. Costs TBD and will include facility use fee \$35 per horse per day, \$2500 for the clinician with anticipated 25 riders. Clinic will run from 9 am-5pm. Cost per rider is approximately \$190 for the two-day clinic. Accommodation and transport required for the clinician. **Requirement:** a volunteer host for Holly Hudspeth.

Fall Schooling Show. To be held on October 3, 2015. Judge will be Danielle Perry. Venue TBD with the possibility of Cedar Valley, Merry Hour Farm, or Jennifer Bolan's place. Discussion: acquiring (buying or borrowing) and transporting sufficient jumps for the event.

VI. New Business

Jenny Susser Clinic. Board and members agreed that another clinic would be well attended. Most likely date would be in spring of 2016, subject to Jenny Susser's availability. **Requirement:** A coordinator is needed to initiate planning.

Other dressage clinics. Suggestions included a Jane Savoy Clinic. **Requirement:** a coordinator is needed to initiate planning and determine members' interest.

Hunter Pace. Location, date and details TBD. Planning Committee includes Holly Ratcliffe and Carolyn Ordahl. They require information from 2015 Hunter Pace. They were advised that the information, including waivers, prize list etc, could be found in the August and September 2014 editions of *The Crossing*, electronic versions which exist through the website and by contacting the Web Mistress Rebecca Brown at 865-386-3100 or rbrown80@gmail.com

VII. Adjournment.

Adjournment proposed by Rita Dunn and seconded by Diane Carlson. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm on June 9, 2015. Next meeting to be held on July 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm, in the same location. Minutes submitted by Carol Mitchell on behalf of the Secretary.

CDCTS CLASSIFIED CORNER

For Sale: Electro Groom Vacuum. Powerful vacuum that removes dirt, loose hair, dandruff, while leaving the natural oils in the coat. Can also be used as a powerful blower. Runs quietly, dual motors allow for one motor operation when grooming sensitive body areas. Tough baked enamel finish on 18 gauge steel, two motor turbines. 120 volts, 575 watts each, 14.85 amps and 150' water lift. Comes with a 10' hose with swivel end, serrated nozzle, vinyl spaghetti brush and blower tip. Measurements: 28" high with 2" x8" wheels. Very lightly used. New is \$600. Selling for \$250. Contact Carol 865-288-7093.

For Sale: TULLYMOR'S TIGGER. Tigger is a quiet, sensible, attractive 13.1 registered purebred Connemara gelding; born 5/1/11. He is a beautiful bay with correct conformation, sound body and limbs, great feet. He is easy to handle and has excellent ground manners (can catch in a big field, easy to lead, tie/cross-tie, load and haul, is good for the farrier, happy in the barn or turned out, etc.). He will cross a creek and ponies very nicely all around the farm, so should be an easy boy to take out on trails. He has shown us his scope over a 4 fence (but thankfully has not made a habit of it). He is reliable enough to become a safe driving pony or even a children's foxhunter or pony club mount, with appropriate training. He has been backed, lunges nicely and is super willing. He is ready for the next level; start him your way. Located in Athens, TN. Contact Vanessa (phone) 423-744-9071 or by email: connemaras9@gmail.com

Free! 21 year-old Percheron mare, free to a good home, great pasture buddy. She is rideable but has slight navicular. She is an easy keeper, on grass and in pasture with run-in, and is very lovable and easy to work with. She does drive, as well. Contact Kathy Ridenour 423-912-1477.

Trailers for Sale: Tobruk Trailers – Merhow and Cherokee aluminum trailers. Custom living quarters for large horses. Hitches and repairs. Call 865-674-7041 or email tobrukfarm@charter.net

Dressage Saddle for Sale. County Connection 18inch W dressage saddle \$2250. Bought new in 2008. Excellent condition, new billets last August and flocked at that time as well. Serviced by Shirley Ferguson, a County Rep. Stored inside house. Saddle can be tried on your horse, within reason. It is a great saddle for helping the rider sit the trot and maintain position. Very comfortable, soft and supple leather. Contact Lauren Irwin 423-304-4143.

Reach the audience you want through an ad in our newsletter

AD Size	Member Rate	Non-Member Rate
Full Page (7"wide X 10" high)	\$10 per month	\$20 per month
Half Page (7"wide X 5"high)	\$5 per month	\$10 per month
Quarter Page (3.5"wide X 5" high)	\$2 per month	\$5 per month
Business Card (3.5"wide X 2" high)	FREE	\$2 per month
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Please send ads and requests to Carol Mitchell. Call 865-288-7093 or email to ericncarol.belcher@gmail.com

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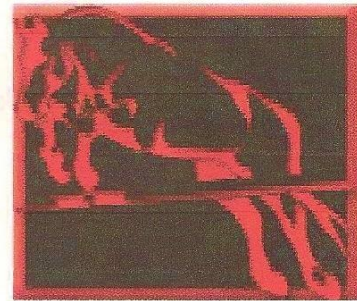
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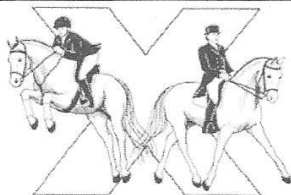
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The CROSSING

Published monthly by the CDCTS
Please submit articles for your newsletter!

Deadline for submission of articles to ***The Crossing*** is the 18th of each month.

Please submit your article by email to:
ericncarol.belcher@gmail.com



Crossroads Dressage and Combined Training Society 2015 Membership Form



GROUP
MEMBER
ORGANIZATION

First Name: _____ Middle Initial _____
Last Name: _____ USDF # _____
Street Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Primary Phone: (____) _____ Secondary Phone: (____) _____
Email Address: _____ Birthdate: _____
(Requested by USDF)

I would like to join Crossroads Dressage and Combined Training Society for the 2014 Membership Year (December 1, 2014 - November 30, 2015). Enclosed is a check for the following membership category:

- ☐ \$23 Charter Membership (*Founding Members whose membership has not lapsed since the formation of the club*)
☐ \$48 Adult Membership (Over 21 years old as of January 1, 2015)
☐ \$28 Junior/Young Rider Membership (21 years old or younger as of January 1, 2015)
☐ *Family Membership - (\$48 Primary Membership + \$13 per each Additional Family Member)

Total family dues submitted with application: \$ _____

List Additional Family Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>DOB</u>
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I would be willing to volunteer in the following areas (circle all that apply):

HORSE SHOWS: ☐ Scribe ☐ Scorer ☐ Runner ☐ Ring Steward ☐ Concessions ☐ Setup/Teardown
☐ Hospitality

OTHER: ☐ Phone Contacts ☐ Committees ☐ Board Member ☐ Write for Newsletter ☐ Publish Newsletter
☐ Web Site ☐ Sell Advertising ☐ Other: _____

Please make your check payable to CDCTS, and return by **December 1, 2014** to:

Julie Noe, CDCTS Secretary
1031 Martin Mill Pk
Rockford, TN 37853

Date Received: _____
Check # _____
Amount _____

This organization is a USDF GMO and its members are automatically USDF Group Members
\$20 of your membership fee goes directly to USDF for your Group Membership

Membership Forms submitted by E-mail will be held until payment is received.



THE DRESSAGE FOUNDATION: support available for Adult Amateurs

CAROL LAVELL GIFTED MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This Scholarship enables **Adult Amateurs** to set aside quality-time, in concentrated training, away from the daily pressures of job and family, with their horse. The recipients will be able to spend a week or more just bonding with their horse; they will have enough time to feed them, graze them, give them a spa bath, or just stand around in the stall with them!

Past recipients have used this scholarship to spend a solid week away from home at a trainer's facility, riding schoolmasters, taking lunge lessons and auditing other lessons throughout the day.

Up to nine \$1,000 scholarships are available each year (one in each USDF Region), plus two additional \$1,000 wild card scholarships (which can be awarded in any Region).

The deadline for the Carol Lavell Gifted Memorial Fund Scholarship is **September 15th**, and we highly recommend getting a head start on this application!

HELDENBERG TRAINING CENTER FUND

The Heldenberg Training Center Fund was established by Ralph and Freddie Dreitzler and their family, who worked with Andreas Hausberger, Chief Rider at the Spanish Riding School and Director of the Training Center in Heldenberg, to establish this opportunity for North American, **non-professional riders** to participate in educational sessions at the Heldenberg Center.

Grant recipients may attend a variety of educational sessions at the SRS Training Center in Heldenberg, including 3 or 5 day theory sessions, learning about classic dressage training at the school. Lunge lessons may be arranged privately, too!

The grant covers the costs for theory seminars, transportation, lodging and food and is available to Adult Amateurs or Young Riders.

Your completed application packet must be received by The Dressage Foundation by **June 1st** to be considered for a grant.



Are you ready to begin applying?

Applications and guidelines are available on TDF's website, www.dressagefoundation.org, or if you have questions, email us at info@dressagefoundation.org or give us a call, (402) 434-8585. We are happy to help you with your dressage education!

Since 1989, donors to The Dressage Foundation have generously provided funds to create a better dressage community...for you!
TDF is your source for support.

Dressage by the River—held at Riverglen; 30-31 May 2015 Official Results are posted

USDF#316301 Levels: Intro – Grand Prix. Results can be downloaded from the USDF website:

<http://www.usdf.org/calendar/competitions.asp?regionpass=3&Typepass=All&YearPass=2015>

Congratulations to our CDCTS members who rode in this event!

Editor's note: I would have downloaded the results to the newsletter but the database did not remain stable and some horse/rider combinations kept getting dropped from the table, so please check on line for your official scores and placement.

Adult Amateur Dressage Shame: The School Master

Dressage tends to attract a certain personality type. Of course this is a generalization but I am ignoring that fact because it does not suit my overall point. The bulk of dressage riders tend to be of a controlling ilk – perfectionists, hard workers, a little anal retentive. That is where the real irony of dressage comes to play – there is no such thing as perfection. We poor saps are going to forever be chasing a standard that is unattainable, and just when we feel we have mastered it, lo, there is another level that confounds us or another horse that throws a new set of issues our way. It is a cycle, but hopefully one that is shaped in a sort of upwardly sloping spiral.

Everyone who is attracted to dressage yearns for the beauty, the elegance and the harmony that one sees in the highest levels of competition (not necessarily Grand Prix – I am referring to any dressage test done truly well). The beauty of these rides is that the combination makes the test look so effortless. Horse and rider flow from one movement to another and the onlookers barely see a thing. With that appearance of effortlessness comes the idea that dressage is easy, an idea that is a dirty lie and not to be acknowledged. But truly, dressage is filled with converts from other disciplines who initially entered the ring with the idea that it would be somewhat similar to riding the flat spaces between fences or like trail in a little square box.

Also dressage is attractive to those new to riding altogether. A new dressage rider – let's call her Annie – has had her children move out of the house and found herself with some disposable income. She literally has a little more time and money and remembers back to those summers she used to take riding lessons as a little girl. She loved them and thinks to herself, "Now is the perfect time to pick up that hobby once again." Annie finds a local dressage trainer because she wants to ride english but does not want to jump. HAHA! YES, ENTER MY LAIR NEWEST VICTIM!, thinks the dressage gods. After a few months on old Dobbin the school horse Annie feels ready for a horse of her own. She can walk, trot and sometimes canter in both directions, so she has a handle on all her basics, right? Her trainer suggests that Annie purchase a schoolmaster that she might learn on, to teach her the movements. Annie agrees and out they go. After an exhaustive search and a substantial chunk of change the wonderful day arrives when Xavier, her silver palomino unicorn, steps off the trailer. He is beautiful! He is wonderful! And underneath that perfect white star on his forehead sits all the information to guide Annie to her top hat and tails.

Cut to a year or so later. Annie is despondent – she can barely hold the canter and Xavier is constantly changing leads. Annie secretly thinks he might be doing this on purpose. And his trot is so hard to sit! She feels like she has been beaten with a sock full of oranges after each lesson. A couple of weeks ago a friend came and filmed her lesson. With mounting (no pun intended) horror she watched herself on the camera screen bounce around like a sack of potatoes, arms in the air, looking less elegant and more like she was in the middle of some sort of seizure. Then her instructor gets on Xavier and around the ring they trot, like a centaur, beautiful, powerful, everything she aspires toward. Annie is frustrated, angry with herself and a bit embarrassed.

This, my friends, is the true beginnings of [dressage shame](#). Annie begins to feel guilty about Xavier, limiting his full potential, not being worthy of such a beautiful silver palomino.

Now here is the essence of a schoolmaster – they do have knowledge of the movements stored away between their ears. They are the best way to learn to ride correctly within dressage, or any discipline for that matter, because when you put the correct aid on, there is a greater chance they will respond to what you are asking. I say greater chance because they are not machines. What also lies between their ears are all the bits that make them Xavier or Dobbin or your particular pony. There are some nice parts and some sneaky or lazy parts as well. Quickly they will discover the holes in your seat and take advantage of them. Even if they are kind hearted and would never do such a thing, you might be using an inappropriate part of your body to ask for a movement. And so you are not ever able to pick up the right lead canter even though you always get the left. Or can only get shoulder in one direction.

I often equate riding to dancing – you and a partner go through a coordinated series of movements indicating the upcoming steps using physical cues. But there are some huge differences – first we are going to take away the male dancer, the lead in almost all dances, and replace him with you. Great, that is still fine. The partner you are dancing with is very good and explains the steps to you, still sort of “sub leading”. Nope, sorry, that is not close enough to riding. So now we are going to make your partner a mute. She can no longer tell you what she is going to do or what is correct. She stands there blinking at you and occasionally swatting at flies. The knowledge is still in the female dancer’s head but she cannot communicate and YOU are the one leading the dance. So you grab her and attempt to waltz across the floor. What results is a painful parade of stepped-on feet, some stumbling and perhaps a torn dress. You end up on the other side of the ballroom, but what you have just done is far from the waltz. Enter your instructor. Using his or her experience they must *describe* to you first how to hold your body as the leader and then how to take her hand. Then they must *describe* where you put your feet and how to dance across the floor. Sometimes you will move your body and there will be unintended responses; you are hitting on moves that your partner knows and you do not, just by accident. Your mind is brimming full but you manage to do one or two of the four things your instructor is prompting. And the one of the two things you execute correctly the female dancer does not respond to because she is also confused at this point. And so you end the lesson having learned one piece of the huge puzzle. This is learning under the tutelage of a schoolmaster. With a green, or unschooled horse, you have a greater challenge because you have a mute who will not react. It takes a dedicated rider with much patience to teach themselves and the horse and without an instructor this task becomes monumental.

So what is my overall point in this rant? Horses live in the moment. They have no angst, they do not brood or sulk, not in the way that we humans have honed. This is not to say that horses do not get frustrated, or angry, or surly, but they are creatures that live in the ‘now’. Though you might go home and cry into your pillow after a bad ride I can assure you that your horse is not doing the same in his stall. Horses crave security, structure and carrots. They are extremely claustrophobic. They will constantly be checking in with the hierarchy in their herd of two (you and him). No horse dreams of greater things. No horse has ambitions. Now is what is important to them- the state of every single moment.

So stop placing meaning onto your horse that exists only in your head. If you care for your horse well, treat him with respect and when you make mistakes under saddle, acknowledge them, you are holding up your end of the bargain. His job is to allow you to dance with him until you grow out of your two left feet. The bulk of dressage riders are adult amateurs so if you did not own your horse, odds are it would be another woman (or man) in a very similar position as you, thinking the exact same thing. Stop looking at the top hats and tail, only thinking of being happy at FEI, and start to enjoy the process of learning how to dance. That growth of communication between horse and rider is what makes dressage so special, and why I have dedicated my life to the sport.

Downloaded on 24 June 2015 from <http://dressagedifferent.com/2013/10/07/the-school-master/> This article first appeared on line October 7, 2013 in the section “Dressage Learning, My Five Cents”

Many thanks to Susan Price for its inclusion in our newsletter.

JJ Tate Clinic 6-7 June 2015

A great clinic was held at Teresa Shafer’s farm, 8712 Holingsfield Drive, Knoxville. Auditors enjoyed JJ’s feedback and the weekend was hot and sunny, with no bad weather to mar the event. JJ always brings high energy to her clinics—starting with her first rider at 8 am and continuing on till her last rider dismounts after 5 pm. Some great take-away points from JJ were: “You can never have too many half-halts” and “If you think you are sitting straight, lean back.”

The rider schedule for the weekend is below:

Saturday	Sunday
8:00 Jean Sullivan	7:00 Jean Sullivan
8:45 Valerie Cheatham	7:45 Dene Masengill
9:30 Erin Liedle	8:30 Erin Liedle
10:15 Teresa Shafer	9:15 Teresa Shafer
11:00 Melissa McKenzie	10:00 Karla Foss
11:45 Faith Green	10:45 Melissa McKenzie
12:30 Lunch	11:30 Lunch
12:45 Anne Williams	11:45 Faith Green
1:30 Gwen Hilla	12:30 Anne Williams
2:15 Lynn Degitz	1:15 Gwen Hilla

3:00	Trish Powers	2:00	Lynn Degitz
3:45	Dene Masengill	2:45	Trish Powers
4:30	Kalen Moon	3:30	Kalen Moon
5:15	End	4:15	End

In the following photos, Kim Clelland captured the interaction between horses, riders and JJ Tate.



JJ Tate, Erin and Teresa



JJ demonstrating 'bend'



JJ demonstrating rib cage lift



JJ taking a well-earned break in Teresa's lounge



JJ pointing out the neck muscling required on a dressage horse

Once again, I extend a big thank you to Kim Clelland for taking these photos of the clinic. As an experienced photographer who has been published in *Dressage Today*, Kim would be delighted to take your photos of you and your horse, in any setting you choose. Please contact her by phone 808-757-0518 or by email at santamomclelland@gmail.com

2015 Events

Next CDCTS meeting will be held on **Jul 14, 2015** at the **Puleo's Grill**, 260 N. Peters Road, Knoxville 37923. The Meeting will start at **7:00 pm** sharp so please come earlier to order your meal and to socialize. The restaurant's website is <http://puleosgrille.com/our-locations/puleos-cedar-bluff>. Please mark your calendar and plan to join your fellow members.

Cathy Fox Clinics. Merry Hour farm holds monthly lessons with Cathy Fox of Lexington KY. Should you wish to bring your horse to train with Cathy, please contact Carol Grau at 865-984-2532 for available ride times. Cathy will be at Merry Hour Farm during the following weekends: **July 4-5, August 1-2, September 12-13, October 17-18, November 14-15 and December 5-6.** To learn more about Cathy Fox, please visit her website www.pineknollfarm.com. For more information on Merry Hour Farm, please visit their website at www.merryhourfarm.com

Fall Schooling Show. To be held on October 3, 2015. Judge will be Danielle Perry. Venue TBD

THE CROSSING



CDCTS is a USDF Group Member Organization that caters to dressage and combined training (eventing) riders and enthusiasts in the Knoxville area and throughout East Tennessee. CDCTS is also an affiliate member of USEA to better serve our eventing members.

By joining CDCTS, you will be on the fast track to learning about shows, clinics and other great educational opportunities in our area. You will get to meet other like-minded, horse-loving people, and you will become part of a group that is continually working to promote dressage and eventing in your area.

In addition, by joining CDCTS, you automatically become a Group Member of USDF and an Affiliate Member of USEA, which provides you with many additional benefits in the dressage and eventing arena.

Visit us on the web for more information and downloadable content at www.CDCTS.ORG

Contact our webmaster, Rebecca Brown at rbrown80@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CDCTS

From the Editor's Desk

Another bit of local horse news discovered in the *News Sentinel* made me go, "*What the What?!*" Neatly tucked away on page 12 A in the local news section of 4 June 2015 edition of the *News Sentinel*, was a short article that reported "Trio's felony charges for horse soring dismissed." I was surprised to learn that the judge, Tammy Harrington, of the Blount County Circuit Court had dismissed the charges of aggravated cruelty to livestock animals against Larry Joe Wheelon, Randall Stancy Gunter and Brandon Lunsford. She ruled that the original search warrant for Wheelon's stables was illegal. Prior to his arrest in 2013, Larry Wheelon sat on the ethics committee of the Tennessee Walking Horse Trainers Association. Wheelon was arrested in 2013 and Gunter and Lunsford were arrested in May-June 2013 in the subsequent investigation of Wheelon's practices.

The *News Sentinel* described the injuries to the horses as: "Several of the horses ...in April 2013 showed signs of abuse and were barely able to stand, according to the Humane Society of the United States." "From 1993 to 2013, Wheelon was cited by inspectors 15 times for violations of the federal Horse Protection Act."

As I was new to the area when this case came to light, I was following it with considerable interest so that I could learn more about the training of Tennessee Walkers. When I first heard of the case, I did an internet search on horse soring and stumbled across the video that an undercover humane society officer made of the brutal training techniques used on horses in Jackie McConnell's barn. McConnell, a noted Tennessee Walker trainer from the Nashville area, was initially charged with 52 counts of transporting and showing abused horses. McConnell pled guilty to a single charge of animal cruelty in September 2012 and was fined \$75,000 and placed on probation for three years. Unless you have a strong stomach, I don't recommend viewing the video because it contains extremely violent content. Other associated videos of trainers who had been arrested and convicted of 'soring' Tennessee Walkers for the "Big Lick" movements popped up and I listened to these people explain how they didn't mean to hurt the horses or didn't believe they were hurting horses with their practices but, most importantly, they wanted to win. What troubles me about these types of incidents is that no one seemed to come to the conclusion that they are being cruel in their training methods until after they are caught, put on trial and found guilty. It is unfortunate that there was no trial for Larry Wheelon and his associates because I would have liked to have learned about his practices and, after hearing the evidence against him and his associates, I would have preferred to make up my own mind about the legitimacy of his activities. With the trial dismissed, it looks like that isn't going to happen anytime soon.

We judge ourselves by our best intentions and most noble acts but we will be judged by our last worst act. Michael Josephson.