

This year I attended the United States Dressage Federation (USDF) Convention in Jacksonville, FL, as one of four delegates for PVDA. The schedule was packed for five days with meetings, presentations, voting, training symposiums and the occasional refreshment break. As it was my first USDF Convention, I enthusiastically hopped from room to room, absorbing every bit of information and taking notes when necessary. Leslie Raulin, Michele Wellman, and Linda Speer were in attendance for PVDA as well. We divided up to cover meetings simultaneously, discussing our findings throughout the day and over meals. Below is a summary of the notes from meetings and presentations we attended. The full story will be available on the PVDA website shortly.

As a PVDA member and MD resident for one full year, I was proud to represent our organization and was reminded of the commitment we have to educate our members. PVDA stands out as an active Group Member Organization (GMO) with many member benefits and a very friendly group of board members who hope to get more people involved in this wonderful sport every year.

L Program Committee Meeting

- Part 1 sessions A, B, and, C of the L Program courses are now open to 30 participants in addition to auditors allowing a greater number of people to learn from the curriculum.
- USDF is in need of GMOs or other organized groups to host Part 2 Testing sessions due to a back log of participants who are interested in testing to graduate.
- In order to allow a larger number of USDF members to benefit from the L Program education, an online curriculum of relevant materials will soon be available.
- It was suggested that organizers who are interested holding Part 2 sessions in Wellington will be able to take advantage of the large number of shows and entries throughout this winter season. Volunteers are needed.

Sport Horse Committee Meeting

- Admittance into the young horse classes is limited to horses with USDF Lifetime memberships. Two horses made to the championships this year without the proper memberships and could not receive their awards.
- A reminder that the ties are not allowed in breed classes and classes cannot be combined if it results in fillies and colts competing against each other.
- Individual Breed Classes (IBC) are designed to be inclusive breed classes and individual breed shows are not sanctioned to create general "non-warmblood" or "colored horse" categories.
- USDF Breed Seminars have been well attended throughout the country, contact the Sport Horse Committee for more information and to offer this educational experience to sport horse enthusiasts in your area.
- Several breed shows have made judge comments audible to the audience. This has increased the interest for conformation classes.
- IBC class scores do not count for Horse Of the Year (HOY) awards, only all breed awards.
- USDF Evaluation forms should be submitted by any competitor with positive or negative feedback from an event. Specifically, USDF needs to be aware of any issues regarding horse or competitor safety. The forms should be submitted within 30 days of the incident. Certain issues related to scores, etc. need to be submitted with a few days.

Region 1 Meeting

- Lisa Schmidt has been voted in as Region 1 director, replacing Allison Head who is stepping down after 9 years of service.
- The PVDA Ride For Life was a hot topic. A new proposed GMO Challenge may increase participation and fund raising for the Johns Hopkins Avon Breast Center.
- A new Region 1 website is being hosted by PVDA's own Allie Packard and designed and updated by Leslie Raulin.
- In order to eliminate confusion we ask that all competitions in our region require the date of receipt for show entries be the received by date. Postmarked entries should no longer be accepted to full show schedules.
- The cost for non-profits (Region 1 and PVDA) will be \$.50 for each printed copy. If PVDA prints 1200 copies of our show omnibus, our cost will be \$600. There has been no decision re posting on a web site.
- North Carolina will be hosting a CDI in 2011.
- The NJ Horse Park has undergone renovations in stabling and footing. The facility will be in top shape for the 2011 Adult Team Challenge and BLM Championships.

USDF Open Forum

- GMO representatives met during to discuss educational ideas, book-keeping, volunteers, creative fund-raising, helmet safety and market strategies.
- Educational ideas put forward were as follows:
- "Grow A Scribe" program which operates to create a group of trained and interested individuals who will be available to volunteer for shows.
- "Trailer Safety Day" partnered with the local Horsemen's association and fire company.
- "Health Day" introduction to alternative modalities for horse care.
- Some regions have organized to rent the mechanical horse simulator.
- For increasing participation at educational events, it was suggested to provide a guest list on the GMO website, encourage trainers to bring their barns, schedule educational opportunities for the same time every year, and provide video conferencing of seminars for members to cannot make the drive.
- There is a helmet safety video available to buy from USDF for your GMO called "Every Ride, Every Time". The huge costs to people, the community, and all around the sport for non-helmet wearing injuries, was offered as a key reason for helmet use.

Jaclyn was very fortunate to attend **Dr. Hilary Clayton's** presentation of the most current equine research. Her two studies on back pain in horses resulted in very interesting findings. In one study the research showed a number of stretches, performed on the ground, can improve the health of your horse's back and shorten injury recovery time. The second study, the result of 40 equine dissections, documented the occurrence of a number of back maladies including kissing spine, fused vertebrae, and fractured pelvis. Of the 40 random horse cadavers over 90% showed moderate to severe back maladies. Some horses showed no significant signs of injury during life. See below for a link to her book and DVD to learn more about the core exercises and stretches you can do to help your horse.

<http://www.sporthorsepublications.com/>

Dr. Jenny Susser's seminar, "Riding with Confidence" was inspiring. A former olympic athlete and current sports psychologist, Dr Susser has great advice on overcoming fear, thinking positively, and achieving competitive mindfulness. Check out my blog to read some of her suggestions and link to her website.

http://www.peaceofmindedmessage.com/POM/Blog_How_was_your_ride/Blog_How_was_your_ride.html