

Region 9 Report

Director: Bess Bruton, TX

2024 Spring Executive Board Meeting, April 23-24 Lexington, KY

Once again spring has arrived early in Region 9. Shows, clinics, seminars are all in full swing. GMOs are busy planning and holding educational events.

Dallas Dressage Club held its annual Judges Freestyle Seminar on Feb 17th, with Joan Darnell. All attendees gain valuable experience and had fun, too.

Oklahoma and Central Texas Dressage both are holding seminars, one with Shelly Frances, and the other with Jec Ballou. And Central Texas Dressage Society is in the process of holding the USDF L Program Part 1, with the last session in April. Many private barns bring in well known national and international clinicians, too.

Our yearly summer regional meeting (in person) is slated for July 19 - 21, in College Station, Tx. Hosted by Brazos Association of Classical Horsemanship. Besides the business portion, we will have a networking session, a tour of the A&M Vet School, a tour of the Bush Presidential Library, lots of camaraderie and fun.

With over 31 recognized shows...of note is the Houston Dressage Society CDI2*/1*/Am/YH/Y/J/PCH and Spring Classic. It is the only CDI in our region. We appreciate HDS and the enormous effort they put forward to hold such a prestigious event.

Houston Dressage Society also hosts the GAIG/ USDF Region 9 Championships & SWDC Championships & HDS Autumn Classic – this year to be held Oct 3-6. This is another huge undertaking, and we truly appreciate and respect all who help to make it a success.

Of the 18 Region 9 board members...we welcome one new: Karin Loftin is our new treasurer. Due to changes in our board structure we have dissolved the Freestyle Committee. We appreciate Susan Howard for her years of service, not only as chair of the Freestyle committee, but in numerous and various jobs thru out the last 20 years. She has been with us thru thick and thin, always there helping.

We have 13 GMO's...of those we welcome two new presidents: Central Plains Dressage Society's new president is Chris Cashel, and Tri-State Dressage Society's new president is Brooke Schafer. We appreciate the service of the outgoing presidents- CPDS Kathy Maxwell, and Tr-State Donna Canales.

Our 12 USEF Licensed Judges stay busy, traveling the states, and some go overseas. Congrats to Celeste Brown on becoming a "r" Dressage Judge. And Mary Mahler who is now a "R" Western Judge.

Of the seven USEF Licensed Technical Delegates we have one who recently retired - Bob Cooper. The shows will miss his professional manner and expertise. Congrats to Celeste Brown on becoming a "r" Dressage Judge.

We are graced with 25 USDF L Grads in our region. Congrats to Richal Flannery and Holly Luke for being added to our L Grad ranks.

The region is also proud of the ten USDF Certified and Associate Instructors.

Since the 2023 fall report we held a regional zoom meeting in Nov. Several reports were given: The Region 9 E-news sent out by Nicole Miller around the middle of each month has over 700 subscribers, with a 50% open rate. Nicole also manages the Region 9 Facebook page, and website. I also periodically send out emails to the GMO's updating them information of interest for their members.

We recognized our 2023 Region 9 Horseperson of the Year – Nettie Olsen. And the 2023 Region 9 Teaching Excellence Award winner – Sarah Denham.

The 30th Horse Person of the Year Celebration held during the championships was enjoyed by many past recipients. Thanks to all who helped sponsor this momentous occasion.

And congrats to Nicole Miller for the winning design for our 2023 annual Region 9 T-Shirt.

Also in Nov... George Williams came to Paragon Farms, Magnolia, Tx, as instructor for the Region 9 FEI Youth Clinic. Everyone learned a lot, and had fun. Even the weather was good.

Marsha Lewis our Region 9 FEI Youth Coordinator is busy planning both the 2024 Youth Outreach Clinic – scheduled for the weekend of June 29, and the FEI Youth Clinic – which will be held in the fall. Marsha is also the go to person for the NAYC – coordinating, holding fundraisers, and helping the riders, etc.

During the USDF Omaha Convention we held an in-person Region 9 meeting. Elected our 2024 Region 9 Finance Working Group: Claire Oxley; Elizabeth Clifton, and Sarah Jane Martin. Most of the meeting was convention information and discussion about the items coming forward for vote at BOG. And about the other meetings, and educational seminars being offered.

We were fortunate to have all 6 PM Delegates represent us at BOG: Arlene Gaitan, Barbara Lewis, Carolyn VandenBerg, Elizabeth Clifton, Marilyn Kulifay, and Sarah Jane Martin. Our GMO Delegates were: Claire Oxley, Christina Harmon, Audris Griffith, Sarah Denham (all first-time convention goers), and Natasha Fernandez. And each of our PM Delegates did double duty carrying a GMO proxy. Appreciate all our delegates!!

Alecia Daniel, our nominating chair is busy looking for PM Delegates for the 2024 Convention in Houston. And will be contacting the GMOs later in the summer for their delegates. Speaking of the upcoming convention...our region hopes it will be awesome. We are making plans for a huge Region 9 / Texas welcome !!!!

With the new year comes new members to the National Committees:

New this year- Bess Bruton has been appointed to serve on the Bylaws Committee.

Other members of the national committees: Jennifer Jarvis – GMO Committee; Alecia Daniel – Nominating Committee; Marilyn Kulifay – Competition Management Committee, and Technical Delegates Committee along with Carolyn VandenBerg, who also serves on the Regional Championships Committee. Sarah Denham – Adult Programs Committee; Elizabeth Clifton- Awards Committee; Marsha Lewis – FEI Youth Committee; and Regina Milliken is Vice Chair of the Sport Horse Committee.

Thanks to all these ladies who give tireless hours to better USDF for our members.

The Dressage Foundation is an important source of funds for both our GMOs and members. Every year we turn to them for help with educational programs. We had several Century Club riders inducted this past year. Congrats to all !!!
TDF helps with two major Region 9 grants: Evie Tumlin Memorial Fund for Adult Amateurs, and the Region 9 Teaching Excellence Award for instructors. Information about The Dressage Foundation is published in our monthly regional newsletters.

Also in our monthly newsletters we help our youth – with information to encourage them along their journey. Included is the Dressage4Kids calendar and updates.

Our Region 9 Omnibus is the regions best fund raiser- supporting many grants and monies for the regions GMO's and members. Due to its 28 years of publication, the region is very financially stable. We are very appreciative for the many sponsors and advertisers who support and have supported us through the years. Thank you!!!!
It takes dedicated volunteers to put together the omnibus...we are already working on the 2025 edition- due out in Oct.

We are always excited when our members, and GMOs achieve recognition thru individual awards and GMO awards. The 2023 USDF Region 9 Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Meredith Hunter from Folsom, LA – she is a member of Southern Eventing and Dressage Association. SEDA won 1st place for the GMO Newsletter Award: GMOs w/ 75-174 members.
Several of our members attended and did well at the 2023 USDF Dressage Finals held in Lexington, KY. Congratulations to everyone!!

Last for definitely not least...we want to recognize all our volunteers...in all aspects of our sport. You are the grease that keeps the wheels turning. You are appreciated more than you will ever know, with your dedication, hard work and long hours. Thank you!!!!

Respectfully submitted,

Bess Bruton