

2026 Region 9 Summer Meeting, San Antonio, Tx
July 18, 2026
Minutes

Meeting of July 18, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 am by Bess Bruton. Alamo Dressage Association hosted & provided the meeting room, and Bess provided the breakfast food. Attendees included Betty Beebe, Jody Lynn DeStefanis, Nina Fassell, Angel Gunn, Barbara Harty, Dyanna Lawson, Marsha Lewis, Sarah Jane Martin, Donna Meyer, Claire Oxley, Gaye Slomka, Leah Stephen, Carolyn VandenBerg, Sandy Venneman, and Cynthia Werner.

Bess appointed Angel Gunn as our timekeeper. Each person was given 5 minutes to talk. Betty Beebe oversaw setting up the silent auction. The auction will be closed at the end of the meeting.

We had recognitions and introductions of regional board members, etc., present at the meeting. Leah Stephens and ADA were thanked for hosting the meeting, & weekend activities/ dinners.

Bess commented that she is trying to get more history of the region. Our region is 37 years old. Currently we have a history section on the website and one in the omnibus. She is asking the membership to send her information. Also, she is asking people to send her or Nicole announcements of events to put on the website calendar and in the enews that she sends twice a month. Please send them, page ready to publish, short and to the point.

Sally Chionsini passed away this year. R9 sent a memorial to The Dressage Foundation Century Club in her honor.

It was announced that we would be walking to eat together on the river walk at lunchtime. Tonight for supper we will walk to the Lone Star Café on the riverwalk.

Angel Gunn moved and Cynthia Werner seconded that we approve the minutes from the December 4, 2025 meeting. The motion carried.

Bess then led a treasurer report discussion. She passed out a comparison, and a long-term estimate. Jody moved and Angel seconded that we approve the treasurer report. The motion passed. Bess announced that our treasurer, Karin Loftin, is retiring and we will need a new treasurer next year.

We talked about the fact we get little interest paid on our regional funds, which are held at USDF. We must keep the money with the USDF. We discussed the information. Donna moved that we ask USDF to put a certain amount into a money market so we get paid better interest. Clair seconded, and the motion passed.

We talked about Jr/Yr money-raising problems. Amounts are becoming short. Funds cannot be given to any particular person. They must be given to the entire team. We have specific requirements regarding how funds can be used each year.

Jody gave a report on the 2026 CDI. Their title sponsor, Southwest Utility Solutions, donated \$5000. There were 17 entrants this year. The open show entries were down this year. They do not yet have the financials finished, so they do not know if they will continue to put on the show in the future.

She then talked about the Regional Championships coming up in Oct. The theme will be a Masquerade Ball. They still need to get more volunteers. Volunteers get lots of perks. If working a full day, they get a hotel day for free plus a t-shirt, and gift card. This year the show program will be online, not a printed version. There will be logistic problems because of the screw worm outbreak. It was mentioned that SWDC donates one dollar of every qualifying fee to help pay for volunteer perks.

It was discussed to help HDS financially with the championships. Donna moved and Sandy seconded to donate \$1000, from Region 9, to go to HDS for volunteer lunches. The motion passed.

We then had a Southwest Dressage Championship discussion led by their Chairman, Sarah Jane Martin. SWDC has a new website. The new webmaster is Nicole Miller. Shows can now apply for recognition and pay on the website. They can also send in their qualifying fees and the list of competitors. Sarah Jane mentioned that competitors need to look on the website to make sure that the shows they are planning to enter are approved.

All SWDC rules are on the website. SWDC costs are increasing because of the new website plus inflation. This year the prizes will be chairs for champion and stall bags for reserve. The yearly meeting will again be at the championships. The time will be determined by when HDS has their parties. Look on the web for when it will be.

The 2027 Omnibus will be published and ready for sale at the R9 Championships - main arena at the R9 table. The new national dressage test will be included. There is an expanded history section. And more history will be added in the 2028 Omnibus. We then discussed advertising in the Omnibus. The advertising is due July 30th. This income helps fund the region. Your business can use the cost as a tax deduction. If the ad is paid for with the submission by July 30th, your name is put in a drawing. The winner gets a free one-page ad in the next year's Omnibus. Central Plains Dressage won the last drawing.

Bess asked everyone to sign up for the R9 enews....sign up on the R9 website. Nicole Miller sends it out by email in the middle of the month.

Betty Beebe led a discussion on education opportunities. We discussed Dressage Foundation Grants. It was noted that Region 9 has several grants. A GMO travel grant is available. Small GMOs are granted money to send an attendee to the convention. Betty also writes a monthly "Education Article" for the R9 enews.

USDF is looking for historical photos, articles, etc. Please send them to the Historical Committee.

We then had a discussion on Jr/Yr, NAYC, and youth led by Marsha Lewis. R9 is sending 6 riders to NAYC, 4 YR, 2 Jrs. This year we are combined with Region 4 for the Jr team. We are sending 2 chefs dictated by USDF. There was not much fundraising this year. Money was raised by the battle of the barn baskets at the 2025 championships, and an online auction being held just prior to NAYC. An expense discussion happened including the priority of how expenses are spent. There are 2 clinics for youth coming up: FEI Youth Clinic with Lilo Fore in Nov. And a Youth Outreach Clinic in January 2027 with John Mason.

It was announced that the Horse person of Year nomination is due Aug 15th, How to apply is on the R9 website. Send applications to Carolyn VandenBerg.

There are virtual education series available for GMOs. Bess asked that our GMOs enter the awards given by USDF, such as Photo, Newsletter, Website and others. These are given at the Convention BOG meeting. The 2026 Convention will be held in Lexington, KY, December 3 -6 at the Griffin Gate. Bess reminded GMOs to send/bring GMO baskets to the convention. These are given away to people who come to the BOG.

Our newly elected PM delegates are Betty Beebe, Elizabeth Clifton, Arlene Gaitan, Barbara Lewis, Sarah Jane Martin, and Janelle Williams.

USDF is having town hall meetings for different sections of the membership. They will be recorded. They are planning one in September on the USDF Finals. And USDF is holding seminars for show managers.

The "On the Levels" is being revised. CE is available for judges, L's, and anyone interested. Anne Kuhns is compiling a list of R9 shows/ judges, to be posted on the R9 website. This enables shows to hire different judges, so riders can qualify.

HDS is thinking about having the 2nd part of the L program. Angel is looking for someone to put on the first portion.

The Dressage Foundation offers many grants. The Region 9 Teaching Excellence Award nominations are due in August. This is run by TDF and it is now easier to apply. People don't have to be nominated, see the TDF rules for specifics. The Evie Tumlin Adult Amateur Award grant has a March nomination deadline.

The newly formed USDF Para Committee is asking GMOs to reach out about offering para classes at their shows.

The USDF Instructor program has been revamped and is open to all.

We then discussed some new ideas to engage and support GMOs. The framework was sent by Leslie Rohrer, the R9 Membership chair.

We then had an opportunity to discuss individual GMO reports. We had nine GMO reports sent in, and they are on the website. Also ideas were given on how to increase and keep membership. And how to better communicate with members. An idea, for 1st time schooling show riders, to give them a prize or gift certificate. The reason is to encourage new riders.

We had a discussion about where to hold the 2027 summer meeting. Oklahoma has said they would host. Houston Dressage Society is also interested, since it will be their 50th year anniversary as a GMO. We had a venue discussion. OK did not send a representative to this year's meeting. Leah moved and Carolyn seconded to have it in OK and to have the meeting both in person and on zoom. The motion passed.

Bess then asked for new business. We discussed safe sport and insurance for GMO boards. And we also discussed horse volunteer issues with safe sport. Virginia Dressage Association has implemented Safe Sport practices, and are willing to share with other GMOs. And the USDF website has safe sport dedicated pages.

Bess suggested checking your member dashboard on the USDF website for accuracy. And please read the USDF enews, especially the Region 9 part. The USDF Member Guide is another great resource of information.

A question about Lite Competitions was asked, and discussed.

Bess pointed out the list of upcoming events/ dates, listed on the agenda.

We had a vote for the Region 9 t-shirt design for 2026. Nicole Miller submitted the winning design. The t-shirts will be for sale, to order through Sept 6th, on an online store, and a limited supply will be offered for sale, at the R9 Championship show, R9 table, at the main arena.

We then called time on the silent auction, and the meeting was adjourned.

