

Centre Line



KZN DRESSAGE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2011

Kzn Dressage Website – www.kzndressage.co.za

Newsletter information : nadinep@sos.co.za

EVENTS TO DIARISE

Dargle Dressage Show on the 6th February 2011 - Lions River – offering both an affiliated and unaffiliated schedule along with two disabled riding classes and eventing classes in preparation for Oaksprings. Schedule is available on the KZNHS & KZN Dressage Websites.

Dynamic Dressage Show 13th February 2011 – Durban Shongweni Club.
Schedule is available on the KZNHS & KZN Dressage Websites.

ESP Championship Dressage 5th & 6th March 2011 - Durban Shongweni Club.
Schedule available on the KZNHS & KZN Dressage Websites.

Jackie Bridel Seminar

Jackie Bridel is currently in South Africa and will be giving a Seminar about her experience with judging in Australia. Jackie was on the National panel of judges for many years and recently emigrated to Australia. Jackie has kindly agreed to give us a talk on her experiences with judging in Australia

Date: Saturday 22nd of January 2010

Venue: The Jockey Academy.

Time: 14:30

Fee: R50 (which will go towards the KZN Dressage fund)

Liz Day Memorial

The Memorial for Liz Day will be held this month.

Date: Friday the 21st of January 2010.

Venue: The St Agnes Anglican Church in Kloof.

Time: 13h00.

HITS, TIPS AND COMMENTS

DAVID "angel hands" MACMILLAN

a Kloof boy returns to teach

[Interviewed by Helen Mathews]

Vicky Mostert and Calet de Vos recently organised a Dressage Clinic at Vicky's studfarm in Pietermaritzburg "Panorama", and at DSC, with David MacMillan, who was born in Kloof, and is now 35 years old and living in America. Vicky first met him as a 14 year old at the Royal Show in Pmbg. The Clinic was such a success that David is planning to return on a regular basis. He has won well over 100 National Awards from the US Dressage Federation, including the USDF Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals all on the same self-trained horse – a very rare achievement. He holds 14 International Dressage Titles at the Morgan Horse World Championships in Oklahoma City.

Q : when, and how, did you start riding When I was 6 my mother – an avid horse enthusiast – took me to visit a friend's stable. As soon as I saw the horses I wanted to ride. I was put on a fairly large chestnut gelding, whereupon I picked up the reins, and trotted and cantered around feeling as if I had been doing this for years. I was hooked, and from then on I was always on horseback, loving it from the very start.

Q : what were your early experiences, and when did you decide on Dressage as your discipline I began immediately with dressage, showjumping, and cross-country lessons, and I have extremely fond memories of riding competitively in Summerveld, as well as on long outrides in the sugar cane with young buddies who also had horses in the area. We would organise "jumping parties" at one friend's house– which essentially meant challenging each other to raise the jumps higher and higher purely to see who would be the last one able to jump clear ! But this happy era ended when I had a very bad fall at 14 years of age, which lost me my nerve for jumping, and more sadly compromised my whole feeling about riding as well. Fortunately, I was at the Royal Show later that year, and seeing Vicky Mostert riding a dressage test on 'Aramis', I was once again "hooked", knowing immediately that Dressage was what I wanted to pursue. My parents were thrilled, and - supporting me whole-heartedly- found 'Impulse' for me to ride : an older school-master who had belonged to Vicky, and had been ridden by her daughter Leanne. After just 4 months of lessons I was chosen for the 1991 KZN Junior Dressage Team, at the Championships in Cape Town, and then again in 1992, in Kimberley, where our team won. That was an awesome experience, with Liz Dutoit as our chef, and her wonderful little dog as our mascot !

Q : who have been your significant trainers and mentors As soon as I had matriculated early from Kloof High School, my parents gave me the most incredible opportunity – to train intensively with Anne Gribbons (now an FEI O judge) in New York for 6 months, with two or three lessons a day, on two Grand Prix horses. Since then, there have been many people who have inspired me along the way, but I do particularly wish to mention two. The first is Vicky Mostert. She was so encouraging to me as a child, and has been a wonderful example of the true professional. I am thrilled to still be in contact with her after all these years, and to find her still pursuing perfection in this sport. The second is my current coach, Gary Rockwell. Not only has he proved himself in the gruelling international dressage competition arena winning several medals, but he is one of the finest FEI O judges in the world. I am very honoured to be studying with him. He is brilliant, and

has invested – and continues to invest – a lot of himself in my education : something I will always be grateful for.

Q : what are some of your finest moments Being musical I love to perform the Grand Prix musical freestyle. My horse 'Winston' has broken every world record set in Dressage for Morgan horses (a purely American breed), and now has a very significant fan club. At the last World Championships in Oklahoma City, when we entered the arena to perform, I was overwhelmed by the enormous crowd, and blinded by the seemingly endless flash photography. Thankfully Winston was not at all overwhelmed, and seemed to fire off the attention. Getting to our first double canter-pirouettes, cheers and screams and tons of enthusiasm filled the air, and Winston just became more brilliant. Our 16 one-tempis got the same response, and with Neil Diamond's music filling the air, Winston and I brought the house down with our final passage and piaffe sequence. The final halt was right in front of the judge. A standing ovation with much enthusiasm sent us off through the spillway ! What was wonderful was to see so many teenagers and young children in love with the sport, and wanting to be part of Winston's success.

I also earned the USDF Gold Medal two years ago for "excellence" in the Grand Prix – a huge thrill, and definitely one of the highlights of my career so far.

Q : what other horses stand out for you I have trained and ridden 4 Friesian stallions from the very beginning, all the way through to the FEI levels. I have ridden 3 wonderful mares through to FEI levels, with scores well into the 70s.

Q : where to from now There is much still for me to learn and achieve. The more I grow in this sport, the more I realize just how humble, and teachable, I need to be. This is one of the reasons that I love what I do. I am thrilled to be returning to South Africa to share this wonderful knowledge that I have spent the last 11 years attaining in the USA. The quality of horses in SA is high, and the riders are talented and dedicated. I am sure that great things are in store for Dressage in SA, and I am excited to help in achieving that potential.

*There were two chief problems that David identified in his clinic riders – firstly, that we "move the bit" in the horse's mouth; and secondly, that we ride with our legs too far back. Of the bit-moving, David was adamant that it is "illegal". It is "too overpowering for the horse in his face", and blocks him, "cuts him in two", leaving him unable to bring his hind legs forward, thus making connection impossible. Still hands, equal elasticized contact on both sides of the bit, and riding from adjustable elbows close to your sides are what make for "brilliant contact, brilliant scores, and happy horses." He demanded "brilliant hands" quoting **Walter Zeitl : "gorilla legs / angel hands."***

Of the legs, the outside leg must steer the horse from a forward position just behind its outside shoulder ; the quarters will then follow. The inside leg remains a support leg on the girth, for the horse to bend around.

He worked on establishing, (or re-establishing, if necessary) the "bridge" over each horse's back, without which "you have nothing of value . . . neither collection, nor beauty is possible".

He focused primarily on the rider's posture and seat, demanding tall, elegant riding, a long engaged stomach wall, head up . . . thinking "I own this arena . . . this is my world . . . I am queen of it". He urged us to "ride up in heaven" saying, simply, "your horse will thank you". David is musical, and a professional singer, so many of his instructions were given within the beat and rhythm of the horse's movement, which gave them infinite more meaning.

*His goal with each rider-horse combination, at whatever level, was to produce the paces that that particular horse was "born with". He would settle for nothing less.
The improvement in his students over the course of the clinic was remarkable.*

Interview : Anita Adendorff (observer) I really enjoyed David's empathic approach. I really liked that he paid so much attention to the rider's posture and its very immediate and observable effect on the horse's way of going; this is all too often overlooked by trainers. I really liked that he used no tricks, just good, basic training - focussing on the relaxation, the suppleness, and a good, forward rhythm in the horse. He insisted that the horse work over its back, and the rider keep a steady elastic contact, so that the horse could reach forward into that contact. This was a good, strong message to all the riders. I could only watch two days, one towards the beginning, and one at the end, but I saw beautiful improvement in the harmony, and the happiness of the horses. It was a steady, natural improvement, from both the riders and the horses, without exception.

Interview : Calet de Vos (rider) He really has a gift of how to get the most out of you and your horse. David has a real passion for instilling the basics.

Interview : Fee Halsted (rider) David re-confirmed for me the importance of single, uncomplicated, minimal aids . . . working the horse forward towards the elastic elbow . . . into the connection. The importance of looking up where one is going, and – a new aid for me (which makes so much sense) – is to turn with your outside leg more forward so you support and stop the shoulder popping out. He gave me so much confidence in my riding ability, and I finished his lessons wanting to start a young horse again.

And myself (rider) ? Well, I have been looking for him all of my riding life !!

Final Comment : Vicky Mostert This plan to bring David back to SA started with the idea that he could be our National Coach --- there were plans put together at the time on how to do this. However, this all fell apart as there was no support from SANEF and no funds either . . . ! Once I stood down as National Chairperson I thought about it, and decided why not just do this for KZN, and that's what we did !! Let's go now from strength to strength !

KZN Junior Dressage Team

We are very proud of our KZN Junior Dressage team who have taken the honours once again at that the Junior South African Provincial Championships . We won in fine style and Kirsten's score was the highest of the competition.

The team consisted of:
Sue Horne - Chef D'Equipe

Kirsten Wing - Hakahana Angus Og
Megan Berning - Livius
Emma Brown - Voigtskirsch Dekan
Julia Van Niekerk - Zandor
Maggie-May Hosking - Skye Pretender

The Grow Grand Prix Journey a Gauteng Dressage Committee Initiative inviting all other provinces to participate

A group of riders in Gauteng have combined their efforts to co-ordinate a programme to develop dressage at the highest level, with the objective of eventually holding local qualifying shows for international competition. All interested parties from all provinces are invited to apply to participate in this very exciting initiative, whether as a rider, judge, instructor or to provide assistance.

Interested parties are not limited to riders....all offers of help such as fund raising, boot camp co-ordinators, general assistance will be gratefully accepted

There is a Power point Presentation on the KZN Dressage Website which describes this initiative in greater detail.

Or if you would like more information regarding this please contact the KZN Dressage Committee

at enquiries@kzndressage.co.za

The first Boot Camp

We are delighted to confirm that our first boot camp will be held on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of February 2011 with NATALIE HOBDAV.

We plan to have 24 horse/rider combinations who will ride prescribed tests from Medium upwards, for evaluation on the first day. Should we finish early, we would like to have an evening session probably in the Lippi Hall or club house, depending on whether it is a practical or theoretical format, focussing on RING CRAFT

For the next two days, we will split the horses in two groups of 12.....i.e. 12 to ride per day. Natalie will work with the rider/horse combinations on improving their performances in presenting tests.

We will be employing someone to video the first session (with audio) for possible viewing with comments in the evening and a copy will be given to each participant.

In order for us to plan this boot camp the closing date is January 10th. PLEASE SEND YOUR APPLICATIONS TO PARTICIPATE TO MYSELF, WITH A COPY TO office@hee.co.za

We are unable to advise you of the cost of participation at this stage....it all depends on members paying their joining fees and our success in fundraising. Assuming we get 24 participants, the MAXIMUM cost each would be R1600 for **two** days ridden participation.....we are hoping that we can bring this cost down to below R1000 which is amazing, considering what is on offer and the calibre of our first instructor.

If we have more than 24 applicants, the ranking system will be used to select the 24.

If you are not selected, you will still benefit from your R1000 membership fee at a later stage as we intend subsidising all boot camps through fund raising initiatives.

We are aware that many will want to be spectators, which we will facilitate..

We will also be engaging with the Judges fraternity to see how they will want to participate.

Location will be in Gauteng.....Kyalami area.....to be confirmed soonest.

Many have asked if they can register horses not yet at Medium level, YES...this is the start of a long journey and the horses will move up the grades.

We stress that this is a NATIONAL initiative and we welcome participation from all provinces. The responses, however from the provinces outside Gauteng has been poor and we are not convinced

that the communication has been good. As we are all doing this to grow the support, we will NOT be chasing anyone and we are relying on prompt responses and ACTIVE involvement.

We are opening up the applications to all horses from EM upwards....this is to accommodate those travelling from out of province. Once we have all the applications in, the ranking system for selection will be used.

The venue has been confirmed at KEP.

With respect to the bank account, it has been decided to use the GHS one which will provide good control and transparency. It is essential however that **ALL DEPOSITS MADE HAVE THE RIDERS SURNAME AND GRAND PRIX INITIATIVE AS THE REFERENCE. IN ADDITION, PLEASE FAX COPIES OF DEPOSITS TO MYSELF ON 0866395368 AS WELL AS TO LOUIS AT 0114681523, OR ALTERNATIVELY EMAIL MYSELF AT accounts@ghsinfo.co.za**

The bank account details are:

GHS, Nedbank

Epsom Downs

Code: 152205

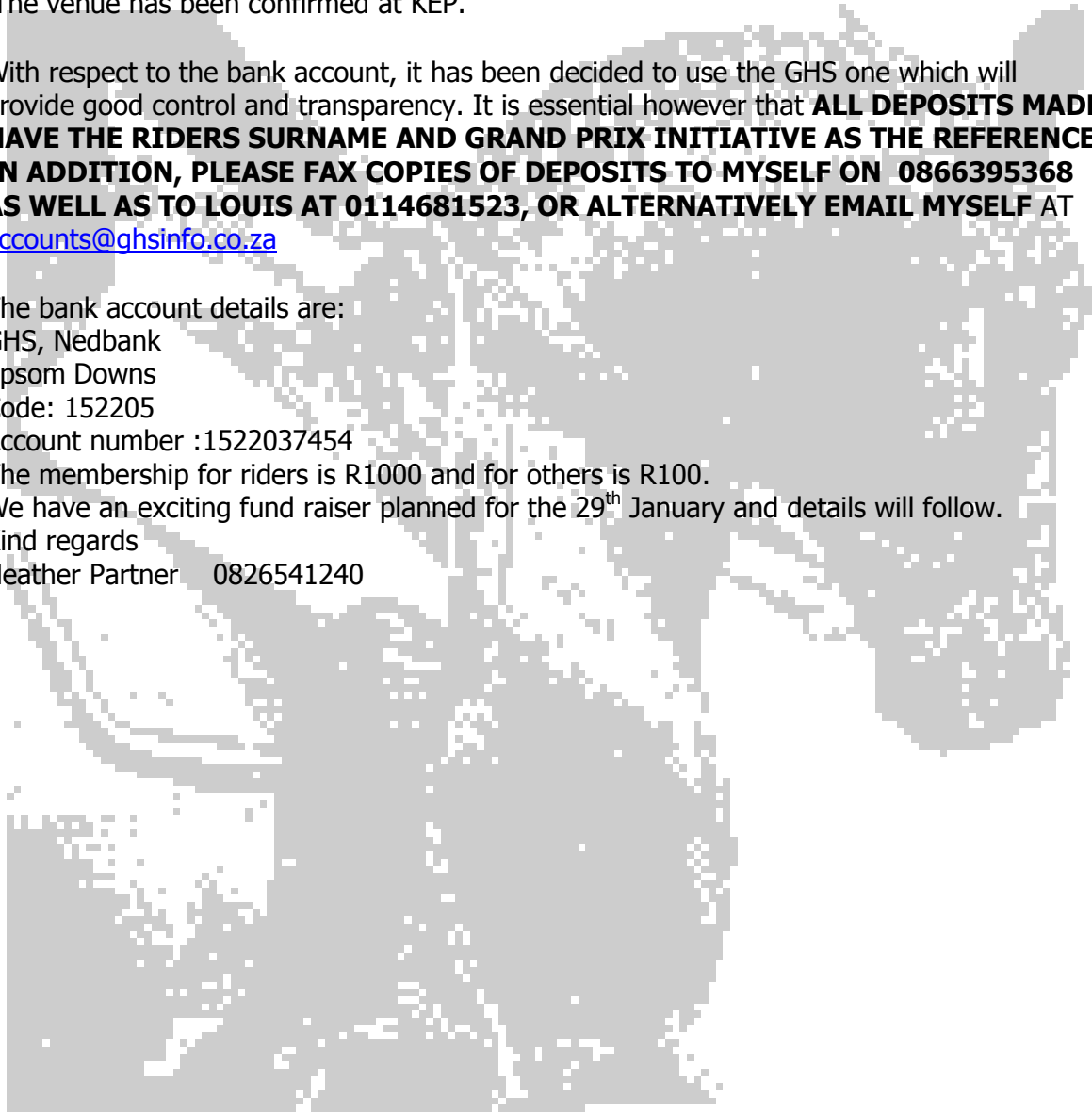
Account number :1522037454

The membership for riders is R1000 and for others is R100.

We have an exciting fund raiser planned for the 29th January and details will follow.

Kind regards

Heather Partner 0826541240



Tribute to Liz Day!

Thank you so much for your very sad note about Liz. She was such a brave and courageous lady and will be missed terribly by the South African horse world and in particular the Dressage community. Liz was a truly committed horsewoman in every sense of the word. The fact that she constantly set herself new challenges regarding the judging of dressage, and was so focused even when she was so ill, bears testimony to the great strength of character she had. Her achievements were outstanding and she was the epitome of a professional, competent judge. Personally, I will miss her sense of humour and the fact that she was never too busy to explain and discuss any aspect of judging.

We will miss her greatly and my thoughts are with her family at this very sad time.

Marlene Breed

Liz Day touched my life about three years ago when she graciously gave me the ride on her beautiful Oldenburg Stallion Asterix. Liz had schooled Asterix from Novice and he had just gone Advanced when Liz gave me the ride. Asterix was Liz's pride and joy and she was extremely upset when she realized that she would never ride him again. I have learnt an extraordinary amount from Asterix and I attribute this to Liz's careful and diligent training of him. He is now competing at FEI level and recently took the honours at the 2010 Avis Dressage Derby. Asterix will stay with me to the end of his days and will continue competing while he is able. Every time Asterix continues to come down the centre line it will be a tribute to Liz and a reminder of what a great courageous lady Liz was.

Sue Horne

We both remember Liz with huge joy as she was one of the first "Dressage Ladies" to give Savannah enormous encouragement as an 8 year-old that Dressage is a wonderful discipline to enjoy and also confidence in herself that she could "master" it on her naughty little pony Highbirnham Gadabout!! I shall never ever forget the day Liz told Savannah she had been selected as a member of the KZN Children's Dressage Team to ride at Kathu Pony Champs, even though she had not, at that stage, ridden an Elementary test!

Savannah's face and childish glee brought the biggest of smiles to Liz's face and I remember her hugging Savannah with such warmth and empathy knowing the path she put us on had finally been vindicated. It was a special moment, almost as special as when, at ten, she rode into the dressage arena up the centre line at Kathu to try and ride the test of her young life at that stage for the team!!

People like Liz touch our lives in amazing ways and probably never even realise it at the time. We are eternally grateful to Liz for the path she put us on all those years ago when we had recently arrived in Natal from the bush in Botswana and were so "scared" of the dressage arenas at Shongweni and felt very out of place. We were made to feel welcome and there was always a word of warmth and encouragement from the very fine lady and judge, Liz.

I hope that even now, Liz is riding down some centre line somewhere or judging at the highest of levels a discipline that truly embodies harmony of movement and soul between rider and horse
June and Savannah (Wilmot)

My deepest condolences to Liz's family and friends, my thoughts and prayers are with them all.
Kind Regards
Tanya Rouillon

