

## A Weekend Away

By Paula Enos

I am honored to have been awarded the 2017 educational scholarship sponsored by Sage Farm and promoted through the Charles River Dressage Association. The \$500 scholarship was to be used for educational purposes, such as mounted or unmounted clinics, seminars or other learning experiences. I chose to attend the CRDA Adult Camp held at Apple Knoll Farm in Millis, MA.

The camp was held in April and offered two clinicians: Lynne Kimball-Davis and Rita Brown. The format included two private lessons each day with alternating trainers. The weekend promoted a comradery among the campers, who were quick to offer praise to each other when warranted and encouragement when needed. We were all responsible for the full care of our horses, from early am feedings to late pm night checks. It required a team effort from all.

Lynne is a bronze, silver and gold medalist who has trained extensively in Austria and England. She has brought several horses to the Grand Prix level and coached many students through the FEI levels. She currently lives in Wellington, Florida and trains with Volker Bromann and Susan Jaccoma.

Lynne has been a long-time anchor clinician at the club's camp and is a favorite among campers. She has a talented way of incorporating a dry sense of humor with her teaching, immediately putting any rider of any level at ease, while still conveying instructive and corrective information. She teaches that dressage is structured learning process, requiring correct equitation and use of the aids, stressing the benefit of working on position, learning to sit deep in the saddle and maintaining the correct center of gravity. I frequently heard Lynne use the phrase "sit on your pockets" to help riders understand how to sit deep and keep your horse under your seat.

A supple horse is probably the most common goal when riding dressage. One exercise that Lynne offered me was very helpful in softening and suppling my horse: coming around the short end half-pass from the corner to the quarter-line, then shoulder-in for a short distance, leg yield back to the long-side and end with a volte in the far corner. This not only helped to supple my horse but made me very aware of what my aids were asking for. If I did not ask correctly, I did not receive the correct answer. This exercise can be done in the walk, trot and canter, and of course both directions.

Rita Brown is also a bronze, silver and gold medalist and has obtained her "R" judging credentials. She focuses on classical training and currently runs her business out of Longmeadow Farm in Scituate, Massachusetts where she offers training to dressage horses and riders. She attributes her own education to working with clinicians such as Tom Noone, Chris Hickey and Pam Goodrich.

Rita was new to camp this year and offered a great insight from a judge's perspective. She believes that dressage should be presented in a positive way to the horse rather than a negative. She suggested that students think of telling the horse to "do this" rather than "don't do that", thereby showing the horse what you want him to do and not punishing him for doing it incorrectly.

Rita reinforced basic riding aids, often referring to information that many of us were familiar with but frequently forget. She reminded riders that transitions are one of the most important training tools. They help to engage the horse, improve suppling and remind the rider to ride from back to front. She also prompted her riders to think only about the hind leg and to forget what the head was doing until the horse was moving forward and through his body from behind. Only then could you address the head position.

In summary, camp is always a very special weekend. We have a chance to be even closer to our horse, doing the mundane daily chores such as cleaning stalls, feeding up to three times a day, and managing night check, while still sharing many laughs, good food, triumphs and struggles. I would sincerely encourage any adult rider, professional or amateur, to participate in the Charles River Dressage Association Adult Camp.