



KDEA E Newsletter –Early August 2024

KDEA Mission Statement

KDEA serves the South Central Kansas dressage and eventing community by providing educational, social, and competitive opportunities that promote a harmonious partnership between horse and rider



KDEA Officers and Board 2024

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Board: Susan Lang, Becky Rolph, Kim Miller, Natalie Petz, Lisa Del Mundo, Marty Foster Dennett, Joanna Gunzelman, Eysley Hatfield-Jr Rep, Natalie Parnell-Jr Rep

In This Newsletter....

- a. **Upcoming KDEA Meeting on Tuesday, August 6th at 6:30pm at Marty Foster Dennett's**
- b. **Upcoming KDEA Schooling Show on August 17th at Three Wooden Crosse. sJudge: Holly Luke, L Graduate from Oklahoma**
- c. **November 2nd – Reschedule Date for KDEA Schooling Showat Twin Creek Trails that had to be postponed from July 13th**
- d. **Volunteer Opportunities**
- e. **Newsletter Article = One Team by Kayla Fulton**
- f. **Newsletter Article – Investment in our Youth by Susan Lang**
- g. **Just For Fun – A Comical look at Weed Eating**

KDEA Meeting – August 6th, 6:30pm at the home of Marty Foster Dennett, Udall, KS Education Session: Competition Warmup Strategies. Send email or text Cassie Black for address if you need it. Everyone welcome...bring a friend!

KDEA Schooling Show. The next KDEA Schooling show is Saturday, August 17th at Three Wooden Crosses in Augusta. Entry forms are on the KDEA website (www.kdea.org) and are due in by Friday, August 9th. This show offers English and Western Dressage, and Eventing dressage tests at **all levels**, as the facility is large enough to hold a 20 x 60 arena for Training 3 and above as well as Western Level 1 and above. If you should want to ride a Working Equitation test, please enter under “Test of Choice.”

Rescheduled! The canceled KDEA Schooling Show (July 13) has been rescheduled for Saturday, November 2nd at Twin Creek Trails. As many of you know, Twin Creek Trails had storm damage in mid July, and although they are rebuilt now, we canceled our show there so that clean up and repair could be done. The judge will be Cassie Black, and the entry form will be the same as the one used fo the July show. The show will offer 20 x 40 classes only – so English Intro A/B/C, Training 1 and 2, Western Intro and Basic, and all Eventing dressage tests. If someone wants to enter a working equitation test, they should enter under Test of Choice.

Volunteer Opportunities. There are numerous KDEA volunteer opportunities available through the year...if you aren't aware of what might be available, check out the link on www.kdea.org for more information on volunteer opportunities. Marty Foster Dennett is our volunteer coordinator, so if you are a KDEA member you are getting emails from her before every show, asking if you can help out. Please answer the call...we can always use volunteers, and training is provided. Come join us and may be make a few new friends! Marty keeps track of all the volunteer "points," so if you have questions about the number of "points" you have earned this year contact Marty. Or if you want to volunteer, contact Marty at shobewalking@gmail.com

One Team

Think of a sport in your head right now. Do you have one? Now, does that sport involve a 1000-pound animal? If it does, this article might pique your interest.

If horseback riding came to mind as your sport, you may have thought of several different things. For example, barrel racing, show jumping, polo, dressage, or even fox hunting. You may be thinking, what do these disciplines all have in common? Well thank you so much for asking, they all require an exponential amount of focus and control along with patience and understanding. These brilliant animals we have been blessed with are not well-oiled machines, they are wild animals. So, we must treat them with kindness and in return they give us their loyalty and affection.

In the beginning of most riders' journeys, we all learn the same thing, when the horse listens and gives in to what we are asking of them, like to stretch down or pick up a trot, we must release once they have listened. We do this so the horse learns that what they did was correct. However, horses don't always listen. They refuse, buck, stop, or just flat out ignore you. As a rider you have two options:

- a. Continue riding, re-group, and ask again. If they refuse once again, be patient until they give in and listen.
- b. Give up and let your horse beat you.

If you choose option b, improving will be difficult and struggle/disappointment will be great. Letting your horse win from time to time isn't a bad thing, it just proves that we all struggle, and we have areas to work on. Not every day is going to be a perfect ride. Don't let it get you down or hold you off from moving forward, you are riding an animal who is 5 time (OR MORE) stronger than you, trust me just getting on a horse is a valiant brave thing to do. Having patience is hard when you work with a large animal who doesn't always want to work. Even I don't always want to work!!

Control, focus, calm... with our horses is a funny thing. We may think we have it, but a random plastic bag blowing in the wind can prove us otherwise. I do not have infinite wisdom to tell you how to fix every challenge. I'm only a 15-year-old girl and have barely lived my life, yet I have learned so much from these animals it feels as if I have lived much longer. When you feel as if you have lost control just breathe and slow it down. I know what you're thinking. Wow, easier said than done. Trust me, I'm aware. Once I realized that I don't have to act as if I'm training for the Olympics and I can take it slow, it eased all the pressure that I was placing on myself. I focused on how my horse, and I must be one unit, not just horse and rider, but a team. When we worked together, we became so much better. We both flourished together as one, and we began listening and communicating to one another. Once you have patience, stay focused, and just breathe, you and your horse will come together.

Oh yes one reminder!!! Please wear a helmet.



use your head

DO THE FIVE-POINT SAFETY CHECK when selecting your riding helmet.

1. FRONT

The helmet should sit firmly in place about an inch above the eyebrows.

More than 1" = too small.
Less than 1" = too big.

2. SIDE

The straps on the side should meet just below and in front of your earlobes.

3. BACK

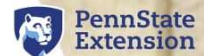
A snug-fitting helmet is best. The harness on the back should prevent the helmet from moving forward. Avoid using your hair to create a proper fit.

4. THROAT

The strap under your chin should be snug but not tight. Tilt your chin up and down to ensure a proper fit.

5. TEST

Grasp the helmet with two hands and rock it back and forth. The skin and eyebrows should move with the helmet.



Always choose to wear
a certified riding helmet.



No helmet can protect against every head injury. However, studies show a dramatic reduction in the severity of injuries when a properly fitted helmet is worn every time you ride a horse. Replace your helmet every five years or immediately after a direct impact from a fall.

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An Investment in Our Youth

Kansas Dressage and Eventing Association (KDEA) had a serious problem with an aging membership and few youth entries in schooling shows. The average age of members, competitors, and volunteers rose year after year, and volunteers were harder to recruit as the years passed. Attracting youth by offering educational events which kids could also enjoy (geometry sessions, cavaletti clinics, horse spa days, Ride-A-Tests) did not seem to increase youth membership or participation in KDEA activities. 4H groups and Pony Club were contacted, but these organizations already had programs and weekend events in which their kids were involved. KDEA offered \$125.00 scholarships for competition or educational events, but oddly enough, no kids, and only a few adults actually applied for the scholarships. When someone was awarded a scholarship, the actual redemption rate on the scholarship was quite low. Efforts to attract youth sort of came to a standstill. There were kids out there taking lessons and riding their horses, but the kids, their parents, and their instructors were not joining KDEA or participating in KDEA activities.

About 3 years ago, a long-time member suggested that KDEA offer free entries to Juniors as a way to attract more youthful riders and their parents to KDEA. The Board kicked around this idea, looking at the benefits weighed against the loss of revenue from free entries. To get the kids to come, and to keep KDEA growing, it was decided to invest in our youth and give free entries to youth age 14 and under. The first year, the kids were not required to be KDEA members to qualify for the free entries, but in 2021 they were required to become members (\$30.00 annual youth membership) to qualify for the free entries. To participate in the KDEA awards program, they had to nominate their horse for an additional \$10.00 fee (there is now no fee)

Some KDEA shows are held at a facility where a large number of kids were taking lessons on their own ponies or school horses, and the instructors at this barn and other barns encouraged their kids to take advantage of the free entry policy. KDEA also offers Western dressage classes, so the kids riding Western were also able to be part of the action. Parents learned about filling out entry forms, ensuring a current Coggins, and finding proper schooling show attire for both horse and rider helped the local tack store with a little more business. Kids worked on riding their tests with their instructors, learning that on show day, they would not be able to have any “do-overs” like they do when schooling with their instructor.

At the first show in 2021, the KDEA schooling show had 45 entrants (a record for the small GMO's one-ring schooling show) and 9 entries were age 14 or under. A few others were between 14 and 18; they were friends of some of the “little ones” who rode who also wanted in on the fun. The one-ring show managed to fit in 75 rides in one day. There was friendly competition among the kids, and the show had youthful energy combined with seasoned help and reassurance from “old timers.” No, the kids' circles were not all round, and the ponies and lesson horses were not “on the bit,” but the kids got in the ring. If a kid's horse acted up for some reason, the schedule was adjusted so they could go down centerline safely a little later in the day. Parents and grandparents came out to watch and cheer on the kids. The kids ran completed dressage tests from the judge to the office to get in their “volunteer hours” and the parents and grandparents helped move the ring when changing from 20x40 to 20x60. After the ride, the instructors showed the kids how to read the comments on their dressage tests, and talked to them about how they could improve. Of course, the kids were also thrilled with their ribbons, waving them around and showing them off to everyone.

KDEA is now in its fourth year of offering two free class entries to those 14 and under, and there has been a definite increase in youth members and attendance at KDEA schooling shows. No, there is not as much of a profit to be found with this free entry policy, but the rewards are much greater than a few extra dollars in the checking account. Our schooling shows still make at least a little profit, and parents of kids have stepped up to help with set up, day of volunteer activities, and tear down. KDEA considers it an investment in the future of the club, and the senior members welcome the opportunity to offer kids a chance to “go down centerline” and find a lifetime of learning in dressage.

Top 10 Reasons Why Horses are Better than Weed Eaters

10. A weed eater needs to be encouraged to eat grass by bumping its “nose” on the ground, but the horse’s teeth will automatically adjust to the thickness of the grass.
9. A weed eater’s fuel line may clog and leave you stranded, but your horse’s fuel line always works (just look in his stall).
8. A weed eater vibrates and makes you numb, but your horse will only jerk on the lead rope a couple of times to make sure he’s still attached to someone.
7. A weed eater jams and stops in heavy grass, but your horse will pull you to thick grass and eat faster.
6. A weed eater will make you deaf after 30 minutes, but you can forever enjoy the sound of your horse munching grass.
5. The weed eater will run out of gas when you are a mile down the fence line (on foot) but your horse will never run out of gas while he’s weed eating.
4. The weed eater pollutes with blue smoke, but your horse’s pollution is useful – it’s called fertilizer.
3. The weed eater’s string will need to be replaced and rewound, but your horse’s teeth never need replacing (just floating).
2. The weed eater will thwart you as you pull the string on the starter again and again, but your horse will gladly start whenever you point him at grass.
1. Weed eaters only work when you remember to get them out of the shop and start them up... your horse helps you to remember to weed eat every time you lead him out of the pasture...and he drops his head and drags you to that long grass the mower just couldn’t reach.