

Dear Dressage Riders,

5/13/2013

My name is Nancy Later Lavoie and I am the Region 8 Jr/Young Rider coordinator for the USDF. I want to tell you a bit about myself and my vision for you as the next dressage representative for our region.

When I was growing up Region 8 was actually Region 1 and encompassed parts of what is now Region 1 as well. We had the strongest dressage in the entire United States. When we had head-to-head competitions such as Gladstone and Insilco championships, the East Coast always won ☺. We had superstars like Lendon Gray, Pam Goodrich, Carol Lavel, Dottie Morkis and Michael Poulin. As a kid I would go to the shows and watch the upper levels, and all I wanted to do was ride like them! Little did I know what a difficult project I had ahead. Like many of the young dressage riders of today I was a successful young rider, rode on the Region 1 silver medal team, went on to get a great older Grand Prix horse and won a lot. Then I had to go to work, so I opened shop. At the age of 30 I realized I had no idea what I was doing.....and I went back to school. Dressage school that is. I stopped teaching and became a working student again. This was the beginning of my dressage life for real. All I ever wanted to do since I was little is ride. I still have a huge desire for learning and ever-growing passion for horses. I hope to be able to share that with you.

I am not saying that my instructors did not teach me well when I was young; I learned a lot from some fantastic trainers. What I am saying is that as dressage riders the first thing you need to know is; learn one system and stick with it. If you decide along the way that system is not for you, research before just jumping to another trainer. Choose a trainer for the system, not the convenience, location, personality or celebrity status. Choose your trainer with thought about the future. It is possible to train a horse from training level to Grand Prix in the same system. I did not understand that as a kid. As young riders you need to know that this sport take decades to learn, not years and for sure not months. There will be steps to take in your learning process. You are not expected to know it all when you get out of Young Riders. However, what I do ask is that you start to build your foundation now. Do not go around the subject like I did and then have to start again when you are old. This advice I can give you because I know how you feel!

I was nervous to go to Germany. But, finally I had an awesome opportunity and I could not resist it any longer. I love it there. I love their horsemanship, I love their system and I love their thorough respect for horses. Of course, just like everywhere there are top class people and less experienced and less educated people. Lucky for me I was introduced to a Master from the start and I still ride with this trainer because his thorough understanding of horse training encompasses every aspect of training I want to know about. He is always studying horses, his knowledge always growing. But, he also has a depth of knowledge that we never get to the bottom of. Mr. Schumacher is my trainer and I hope for you all to have the experience of riding with him. But, also I hope that if you choose to pursue this sport as a lifestyle that you are able to find a mentor as awesome as the one I was able to find.

Presently I have a training stable in Massachusetts in the summer, and one in Florida in the winter. I have had many successful horses in the show ring in the past. I have competed nationally and internationally through the Grand Prix level. I have also been part of the team that went with horses to European Championships, World Championships and Nations Cups. As your Chief I hope to make the experience of the NAJYRC the best it can be. As your Regional Coordinator I want to help make education available to you and your trainers. I have a dream to grow Region 8 back to the top of the US leader board, but I cannot do it without you! We need your help with fundraising and also with ideas. What do you want from us to help you get where you want to go?

Please feel free to find me at the shows or email me at region8dressage@yahoo.com with your ideas. This is not only for declared Jr/Young riders. This is for all of you. I cannot wait to meet you and show the US that the passion for dressage is alive and kicking in the North East 😊

Sincerely,

Nancy Later Lavoie