

Margaret Spencer – Burlwood Dressage at Equine Line, May 16-17, 2009

Entry Closing Date: May 6th, 2009

Why you should show early in the season:

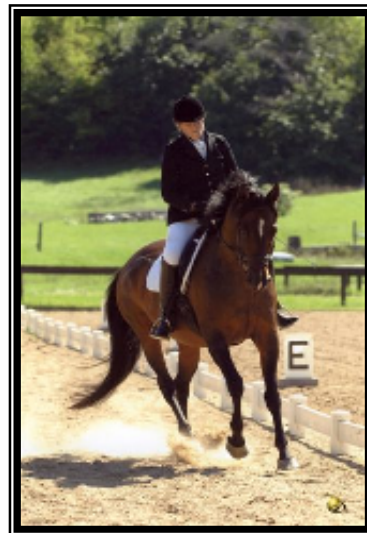
- ✓ Measure your riding skills since last season
- ✓ Get a base line for where you are if you didn't show last year
- ✓ Experience in the show arena for you
- ✓ Experience for your new or young horse
- ✓ FOR FUN!

Now let's make shows less scary and more fun by evaluating the following:

1. What will the judge think?
2. Will my horse be acceptable?
3. What if everyone will be watching?
4. What if I don't place well?

Now let's look at what really happens at a show:

1. The 'judge' is nothing more than a reporter. They have their guide lines as to what should be happening, which is written in the test directives. They 'report' on how well you followed the directions. For instance, they may comment on 'circle too small' or 'lack of rhythm'. This is not a judgment; it is a fact. The judge makes a comment on what they are seeing in relation to what the test is asking. Remember that judges are still riders and they too started at the beginning. They really do want you to learn and have good direction.
2. Some of the horses at the show are back yard pets, some are cast offs, and some may have been free. Even the expensive horse with good training may be the worst behaved on any given day. One never knows which horse will pick show day to make his own decisions. You may have a great horse for you. Showing helps you see this.
3. Those people who have the time to watch will do so for several different reasons. It could be that your horse's color caught their eye. Perhaps they are at their first show, and are watching dressage for the first time. Maybe your horse reminds them of their horse which is still at home and they are looking for the courage to show.
4. Do you know who really places the class? The calculator!! Yup. The people in the secretary's office punch in the numbers and the calculator gives the figures that determine the placings. Let's blame it all on the machine!



So, take a deep breath, rethink what a show is all about and enter the first show so that you will have a chance to chart your progress at a few or many shows through the season.

And there are many *really fun people* that attend the shows, probably friends waiting to meet you. Don't forget, they may be going through exactly what you are going through!

SHOWING CAN BE REALLY FUN!