

THE QUARTERLY COLLECTION

A Z W E C N E W S L E T T E R

*STEP INTO THE PAGES OF OUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER,
WHERE WE CURATE THE FINEST AND MOST UP-TO-DATE
NEWS AND INFORMATION JUST FOR YOU!*

events / news / horsemanship / ponderings / competition/ art





"Hello AZWEC Members,

The holidays are over and it's full steam ahead! Our first newsletter of 2024 for the dedicated AZWEC member is here, ready to elevate our communication game and keep everyone in the loop.

But hey, we want your input! Any suggestions or topics you'd love to see? We're all ears! Plus, if you've got a great story or want to introduce you and your fabulous horse, send us your articles and pics.

Slide those submissions over to kasey@theridersmechanic.com. And if you're dreaming of being a sponsor or getting your ad in the limelight, hit up Kasey for the details.

Stay in the know with AZWEC – hop on our Facebook group 'Arizona Working Equitation Club' or cruise to our website at www.azwec.org.

Cheers to keeping everyone in the loop and making AZWEC awesome!

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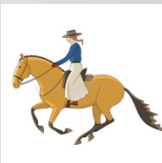
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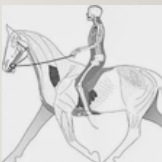
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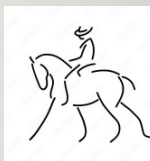
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PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Congratulations to everyone who received awards at our fun Year End Award Banquet in December, at Chaparosa Ranch in Rio Verde! It was great to see all those smiling faces and enjoy some time together, off-horse! A lovely way to wrap up what has been a very busy showing year.

Looking forward to 2024, AZWEC has an amazingly exciting schedule, including Online Trainings, Clinics, Schooling Shows, Cattle Trials, Rated Shows - and culminating in our Finals Show in December! We are also excited to be able to put on our first ever Youth Schooling Show - a testament to the exciting growth in our Youth Division.

We are in the process of forming our Committees who will be making all of this happen throughout the year, as well as handling all those essential

but perhaps less exiting tasks such as Budgeting, Documentation, Legal Requirements, and Communication!

In order to meet our legal/financial commitments, we needed to re-establish our organization, as 501 (c) 7 non-profit, with a new official name of AZWEC. Please be sure to use that name if you need to make payments to us, or in any documentation relating to the Club.

I want to wish each and everyone of our Members all the best for 2024 - both in terms of Working Equitation, and also in your personal and professional lives!

Here's to a fantastic 2024 everyone!

Judy Mackenzie
AZWEC President 2023-4

AZWEC NEWS



AZWEC 2024: A YEAR OF LEADERSHIP AND EXCITING FINALS AHEAD!

As we embark on a new year, the Arizona Working Equitation Club (AZWEC) is proud to announce its dedicated board members for 2024:

- President: Judy Mackenzie
- President Elect: Tessa Nicolet
- Past President: Amy Star
- Treasurer: Susan Hapak
- Secretary: Robin Lindsey

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the retiring board members from the previous year, Joy Chadsey and Marguerite Tan. We extend our gratitude to those who have stepped up to serve the club in 2024.

AZWEC Finals on the Horizon:

Mark your calendars for the highly anticipated AZWEC Finals Show, tentatively scheduled for December 6-9th.

The exact Phoenix location will be announced soon.

To qualify for the finals:

- Rider/horse partnerships need 3 scores of 58% or higher, averaging Dressage/EOH scores, with no DQ in Speed to qualify. Scores can be accumulated from Schooling Shows or Rated Shows.
- Levels 5-7 require 2 qualifying scores from Rated Shows.

For inquiries or further details, please contact Tessa Nicolet at cohesivehorsemanship@gmail.com.

Also, please be sure to see the list of new rule changes for the upcoming 2024 competition season located on pages 6-7.

We're gearing up for a year of camaraderie, competition, and equestrian excellence. Join us on this thrilling journey with AZWEC!



SPONSOR HIGHLIGHT

MOLLY OCHOA ~ A GRACIOUS HOST FOR AZWEC'S AWARDS BANQUET

The Arizona Working Equitation Club extends its heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional sponsor, Molly Ochoa, for her generous contribution to our recent awards banquet. Molly's dedication to our equestrian community was brilliantly showcased as she opened the doors to her breathtaking facility, setting the stage for a memorable and joyous celebration.

Molly's commitment to supporting the Arizona Working Equitation Club goes beyond words, and we are deeply appreciative of her enthusiasm and generosity. Her beautiful venue provided the perfect backdrop for our awards ceremony, elevating the entire experience for our members.

AZWEC is privileged to have sponsors like Molly Ochoa, whose unwavering support helps us foster a vibrant and thriving equestrian community. We extend our sincere thanks to Molly and look forward to continued collaboration, celebrating the spirit of Working Equitation together.

Thank you, Molly, for being an integral part of our success and for sharing your passion for horses and community with us!



CHAPAROSA RANCH
PROFESSIONAL EQUESTRIAN FACILITY

HORSEMANSHIP MINUTES



FEEL - THE HOLY GRAIL OF RIDING

BY KASEY REEDER

Sensitivity or 'feel' in horsemanship is often described as the holy grail of riding, a skill that riders continually strive to achieve. It's the ability to feel and respond to the subtlest changes in the horse's movement and behavior. However, it's not an innate talent; rather, it's a skill that can be developed and refined over time.

The challenge many riders face is how to learn this skill effectively. Instructors, too, find it challenging to put this intangible concept into words that their students can grasp. But through years of working with riders and horses, I've come to understand that developing sensitivity starts with a strong foundation in the rider's own body awareness and posture.

To become a sensitive rider, you must first learn how to be in tune with your own body and how it moves in everyday life. This means cultivating better posture and fluid, balanced movements not just in the saddle, but in your daily activities.

It's about becoming aware of your body's alignment, balance, and muscle engagement, both on and off the horse. Only when you can maintain this level of awareness in your everyday life can you begin to extend it to your time in the saddle. Feel is essentially an extension of this heightened body awareness. By developing a keen sense of your own posture and balance, you become more attuned to even the slightest shifts in the horse's movement beneath you.

So, learning to feel the horse and respond to its movement and behavior is a journey that starts with your own physical awareness and fluidity. The rider's path to becoming a sensitive equestrian begins by mastering the language of their own body and then extending this awareness to their equine partner. This holistic approach not only makes you a better rider but also strengthens the unique bond between you and your horse, forging a deeper connection built on trust and responsiveness.

SYNCHRONIZED STRIDES SPOTLIGHT

LIN JOHNSON

California-born and Wisconsin-raised, I've been riding throughout my life, inspired by my mother's love for horses. My journey into showing began in 1998 when I encountered a horse with physical challenges, leading me to arenas with soft, level footing. I have a history of showing in APHA and AQHA. My interest in working equitation sparked through my friend Kim Storm, who suggested I give it a try while we were both participating in Equine Trail Sports. What captivates me about this venue is the supportive and helpful community. My aspirations include reaching Level 7.



My equine partner, "Scarlette," a double-registered AQHA/APHA 9-year-old mare, has been integral to this journey. In the past year, we showcased our skills in Level 1 while working on perfecting lope departures and lead changes. I'm thrilled to report our success, and we are now competing in Level 2 in 2024. Grateful for the mentors, friends, and supporters who have played a significant role in our journey, I look forward to continued success in the future.



USAWE NEWS

2024 NEW RULE CHANGES

- 1.2: If there is a Cattle trial, it must be held in conjunction with a licensed competition.
- 1.3: Clarified definition of Youth, Amateur, and Open divisions.
- 1.5h: A horse must have a minimum BCS of 4 to compete.
- 1.8e: A horse is limited to no more than six rides in one day.
- 1.8f: All horses competing in USAWE-licensed competitions must be recorded with USAWE.
- 1.9.1d: Drop, flash, or figure 8 nosebands may not be used with bits having a curb chain or strap.
- 1.9.2b: Shin guards, boots, or protective wraps are allowed in EOH, Speed, and Cattle trials (clarification).
- 1.12: Rider salutes with a nod of the head and a drop or sweep of the hand.
- 2.2: Licensed shows must be conducted in accordance with the USAWE Competitions Manual.
- 3.1, 3.3, 3.4: Show Manager, Judge, and TD serve on the Protest Committee.
 - 3.1, Show Manager: o Show Manager must manage show in accordance with USAWE Competition Manual. o If the Show Manager is competing, an alternate must be named in advance of the show. Alternate serves on any protest committee needed for that competition. The alternate may not compete.
 - 3.3, Judge: o When two or three judges officiate, the scores are averaged. In competitions with five Judges, the highest and lowest marks are excluded; the final score for the test is the average of the other three marks. o Adjusted requirements for judges by rating.
- 3.8: Biosecurity procedures must be practiced when inspecting horses.
- 3.14: Automatic timers are recommended for Speed trials in championship and licensed competitions. A manual timekeeper must be present as backup. Two timekeepers are required if there is no automatic timer, one to serve as backup.
- 3.16: The Announcer or the Sound System Manager starts the music for the L7 test.
- 3.20b: Attendance at LOC seminar classroom sessions held immediately prior to and in conjunction with a licensed competition is permitted.
- 3.20i: The Scorer may not compete.
- 4.9.3: Included USAWE address for appeals fee.
- 5.3: Clarification on Judge placement in Dressage tests. (New section; subsequent sections in Section 5 renumbered.)
- 5.5, Trial Execution: o Competitors in all levels through Advanced (L6) perform movements in the order and location specified. o L7 tests are ridden in a freestyle format to music. o L1 and L2 riders may have a test reader. Note: This option is no longer available for L3 (Novice B) riders.
- Table 6-1: o 3. Pen: L4 executes at Walk o 11. Rounding Posts: L1 executes at Walk o 13. Double Slalom: L1 executes at Walk or Trot
- 6.4, Course Design: o Course S/F markers must clearly indicate direction on the course and course map. o L1 riders are limited to carrying the pole only in Remove Pole, Spear Ring, and Replace Pole obstacles. o Course maps may be posted 1 week prior to the start of a show.
- 6.6: Trial Execution: o All four of the horse's feet must clear the obstacle boundary to exit. o L2 riders not required to canter between any obstacles associated with the bull line. o Clarified resetting obstacle elements for L1 riders.



USAWE NEWS

2024 NEW RULE CHANGES CON'T

- 6.7, 6.8: Switched these section numbers. Now 6.7, Course Errors and 6.8, Scoring. • 6.7, Course Errors: o Course errors will result in a DQ if not corrected. o Following a course error, an obstacle must be performed again in its entirety, including entry/exit marker if present, to avoid a DQ. o Clarified when a correction must be made for going the wrong way through a Start/Finish marker.
- 6.8: Presentation collective includes cleanliness of horse.
- 7.6: New section to address course errors for the Speed trial. (Renumbered subsequent sections.)
- 7.7: Redefined requirements for manual timekeeping. • 7.8d: Clarification for dropping the Gate • 8.3: Number of cattle should be at least 55% of the number of competitors. o B.2: Clarified execution of Figure 8 and Reverse Figure 8. o B.3: Clarified perpendicular entrance requirements for Pen. o B.5, B.6: Clarified requirement for riders dropping the pole. o B.5: Clarified execution requirements for Remove Pole. o B.10b, B.11b: Riders do not have to halt when replacing the cup on the Reinback “L” and Rounding Posts. o B.13a: Double Slalom to have five posts for L1-L5; seven posts for L6 & L7. o B.15a: Jump for L1 consists of a cross-rail no higher than 12 inches. o B.15c: Assessment criteria includes rider’s balance. Rider interference with the horse’s mouth or back during the jump or landing is a serious mistake.
- Appendix G: Renamed to Rider Division Policy. Added section on division classifications. Clarified when riders can elect to change divisions. Amateur riders can accept prize money from WE competitions.
- 1.3a: Option to subdivide the Youth division. Youth division riders may only compete up through Level 6.
- 1.6g: Restriction for Masters level to be offered only to Open division.
- 3.2: Requirement to retain copies of score sheets and results (relocated to the Competition Manual).
- 4.4: References related to drug testing.
- 4.7: Requirements on offering additional awards.
- 5.5: L3 riders are no longer allowed to have a test reader in Dressage. • Table 6-1: Non-WAVE obstacles
- 7.8c: Dropping and failing to replace gate as a 30-sec penalty; clarified in 7.8d.
- 7.9j: Taking more than 20 seconds to jump up or down the Bank.
- 8.4: No riders may be assisted through the gate by anyone on the ground.
- Appendix B: o B.10b, B.11b: Requirement for second halt when replacing the cup on the Reinback “L” and Rounding Posts o B.16a: Zig-zag configuration in Sidepass Rail obstacle o B.16b: Requirement that horse must be positioned with its head is to the inside of the “L” configuration in Sidepass Rail obstacle. o B.19b: Option to execute left barrel first in Drums obstacle o B.20 – B.23: Non-WAVE obstacles

UPCOMING EVENTS

2024 SHOW SCHEDULE

February 25th – Schooling Show- Phoenix – Judy Mackenzie

March 24th – Schooling Show – Tucson - Amy Star

April 6th – Rated Show - Sonoita - Amy Star

April 28th – Schooling Show - Orme School, Mayer - Judy Mackenzie

June 1st – Rated Show - Payson – Tessa Nicolet

July 13 -14th – Rated Show - Flagstaff - Amy Star

August 11th – Schooling Show - Show Low - Judy Mackenzie

August 25th – Rated Show - Chino Valley - Tessa Nicolet

September 14th – Rated Show - Payson – Tessa Nicolet

October 13th – Schooling Show - Chino Valley - Susan Hapak

October 26th – Rated Show - Payson – Tessa Nicolet

November 2nd – Youth Schooling Show – Mayer – Judy Mackenzie

November 10th – Schooling Show - Rio Verde - Judy Mackenzie

December 6th-9th - Rated - AZWEC Finals – Phoenix area - Amy Star & Tessa Nicolet - DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



EDITOR'S CORNER

HOW RIDER BIOMECHANICS INFLUENCES RIDER-HORSE COMMUNICATION.

Rider Biomechanics refers to the study of how the rider's body moves and functions while in the saddle. It encompasses a range of factors, including posture, balance, alignment, and movement patterns. The rider's biomechanics play a pivotal role in establishing effective and clear communication with the horse.

Here's how:

- **Balance and Stability:** Biomechanics contribute to the rider's balance and stability in the saddle. When a rider maintains proper alignment and posture, they become a more stable and secure presence for the horse. This stability reassures the horse and allows it to focus on the rider's aids rather than compensating for imbalanced weight shifts.
- **Aids Clarity:** Clear and precise aids are essential for communicating with the horse. Biomechanically sound riders can apply aids accurately because their body movements are controlled and intentional. For instance, a well-balanced rider can use their seat, legs, and hands independently, sending specific signals to the horse.
- **Enhanced Feel:** Biomechanics also enhances the rider's ability to "feel" the horse's movements and responses. When a rider is in tune with their own body's mechanics, they can better perceive the horse's subtle cues and adjust their aids accordingly. This heightened sensitivity improves the quality of communication between rider and horse.
- **Minimized Interference:** Correct biomechanics help riders minimize unintentional interference with the horse's movement. A rider with good alignment and posture is less likely to hinder the horse's natural gaits or impede its balance. This, in turn, allows the horse to move more freely and comfortably.
- **Biomechanical Corrections:** Rider biomechanics also enable riders to make effective biomechanical corrections to the horse. For instance, if a horse is not responding as desired, a rider with solid biomechanical knowledge can adjust their own posture and aids to influence the horse positively.
- **Non-Verbal Communication:** Much of rider-horse communication is non-verbal. A rider's posture, seat, and leg positions convey messages to the horse without spoken words. Proper biomechanics ensure that these non-verbal cues are consistent and meaningful.

In short, biomechanics serve as the foundation for clear and effective rider-horse communication. Riders who understand and apply sound biomechanical principles not only enhance their riding skills but also foster a deeper connection with their equine partners. This connection is built on trust, understanding, and the ability to converse fluently through the language of movement.

RESOURCE ROUNDUP

A GUIDE TO OUR CURRENT WORKING EQUITATION PROFESSIONALS

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