



## Presidents Message

This month we have had a hint of cooler, dry fall weather that is perfect for driving.

Regrettably, we are still driving in our own pastures, trails, and roads because of COVID. The year 2020 has been stressful in so many ways for all of us. We had hoped that by now outings and driving opportunities would be more social with less distancing.

Fortunately, we were able to bring Michael Scott back for another fully scheduled clinic on October 3rd. Several auditors took advantage of the opportunity to learn with the drivers and ask questions in the evening discussion session. Following that Q&A, several members took Michael to a well-deserved dinner at Longhorn Steak House in Lee's Summit for more conversation and questions. A main subject of interest was of course, "When can we get Michael back!"

Organizer Judi Adams says everyone had a great fun, educational day *and* we have six new members including two from Salina. Judi is also looking ahead to 2021 to schedule Michael's next clinic.

Last month we announced that because of COVID the board decided to move the annual meeting from its usual December date to late October. Since then, again because of a rise in COVID cases in our area, your board voted to cancel the meeting altogether and hold the election online this year.

Included with this newsletter is the suggested 2021 slate of candidates put together by the Nominating Committee of Dick Brown (chair), Jerry Plummer, and Rae Jean Powell. Many thanks for their time and energy preparing this for us. According to our By-Laws members may also nominate additional candidates for consideration as long as that person has first agreed to accept the position.

Until we can meet safely,  
drive safely and stay safe.

*Linda & Barbara*



## **Suggested 2021 CDSGKC Election Slate**

Slate suggested by the 2021 Nominating Committee: Dick Brown (chair), Jerry Plummer and Rae Jean Powell. This year we will not be holding our usual Christmas meeting when we historically hold the election, but will be holding it online.

President (2-year term)

Linda Barta

Secretary (2-year term)

Barbara Kirby

Vice-President (1-year term)

Judi Adams

Board Members (3 year terms; vote for 2)

Sue Champion

Gary Mason

As this is just a suggested slate, any member may make an additional nomination as long as your nominee approves.

Additional Nominee (include office)

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We hope you will take some time looking over this suggested slate to make your decisions. We will email the actual ballot in early November and then you can type in or copy the names of those who you have chosen to vote for.

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## **Reflections on the October Scott Clinic**

Two of our new members (sisters) felt so strongly about the value of Michael Scott's latest clinic that they sent these thoughts—

### **Janette Michaels:**

*Michael Scott helped me to understand how to put my horse in a frame and how to encourage him to stay in a frame. He encouraged patience, softness and persistence. He also helped me to understand the length of time it takes for my big bodied horse to warm up and be ready for work. He also helped me with equipment, making sure that a new harness fit correctly. Lastly, Michael helped me better understand my horse, his needs and his potential. I am so glad that I was able to have a session with Michael Scott, and I hope he returns to the area soon! Thanks to CDSGKS for organizing his visit.*

*Michael Scott takes a well-deserved break during our October clinic, giving everyone a chance to absorb the many great driving tips he shared.*



### **Danette Michaels:**

*I became the lucky owner of Smokey, a sweet and spunky 5 year old VSE gelding (Mini B) in July. He had started driving, but still needed lots of work. He had a very difficult time turning to the right. When asked, he acted a little scared, refused, and sometimes reared or backed up. I needed work as well. I am older and tend to get nervous when the horse is nervous (probably due to a bad horse accident in childhood).*

*Two lessons with Michael Scott have helped us immeasurably. It is difficult to explain the transformation after Smokey's and my first lesson in August. Michael tuned right into Smokey's personality and how to work with, instead of against, his feistiness. I learned to let him warm up by choosing his own gait. Sometimes he trots right out and even breaks into a canter for a few strides, but other times he prefers to just walk. I learned how to use aids to teach him to turn on his weak side. After that first lesson, I lost all nervousness; Smokey quickly overcame his weak side problem; and now we are driving all around the property, including trails. Plus we have about a ½ hour route on the country roads.*

*The October 4th lesson was more about me learning how to drive correctly. We practiced serpentines, and I learned about focusing my eyes on where I want to go, rotating my torso, and holding the reins correctly to get the best result. I also learned that formal exercises such as serpentines and figure eights help improve driver/horse communication and will translate to better pleasure driving on trails or roads.*

*I am over the moon with the progress Smokey and I have made. I attribute a huge part of this progress to my two lessons with Michael Scott.*

*Sue Martin getting Michael's assessment of the future of this young pony in carriage driving, starting with line driving.*



## **So, you think you know how to drive?**

By Judi Adams

Drivers in the clinic ranged from new to seasoned. Michael Scott stressed to almost all of them one idea — Know your basics! Even the very elementary basics of how to enter and exit a vehicle safely. Practice, practice, practice; but do it correctly.

When driving or teaching, know your equine as well as your child. Some learn best in short bursts followed by relaxing intervals. Others can learn in 10-12 minute lessons followed by 5 minutes walking on a loose rein or other relaxation before returning to learning again. Still others can only learn in 2-3 minute periods with 15 minute intervals. Know *your* equine's needs.

### **Soft hands**

Michael talked about softness and using the correct bit; having soft hands; positioning the hands correctly to be ready for any maneuver / situation. Finding that sweet spot. For drivers with stiff fingers, he taught how to turn finger movements into soft wrist movements.

Using small movements, not large. Staying out of your equine's mouth.

He had a lot of specifics, stressing smoothness in making corrections.

- Do not be abrupt.
- Keep a steady hand giving instructions for the next maneuver.

- Do not change speeds unnecessarily, allowing your equine to go slow, fast, then slow again. It confuses them and they don't know what you are asking.
- Keep them steady on a soft bit.
- Keep their attention. You are driving your equine, not allowing him to do what he wants.

Michael also talked about preparing the equine and the driver for turns. These could be arena turns or obstacle/serpentine turns. Every driver needs to know how to set up their equine to turn whether it is the pleasure driver or the events/games/derby driver.

### **Final thoughts**

Above all — Know your basics! Know your equine! Ninety percent of driving issues originate with the driver, not the equine! If we would remember this, we would be better off, he said.

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**"A well-tuned horse is like a finely tuned instrument;  
but you still have to learn to be a musician."**

— from Facebook

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### **Officers/Board**

Co-Presidents: Linda Barta, 816-805-4252 & Barbara Kirby, 816-590-2982

[president@cdsgkc.org](mailto:president@cdsgkc.org)

VP: vacant [vice\\_president@cdsgkc.org](mailto:vice_president@cdsgkc.org)

Secretary: Mary Loy Brown, 816-914-6976, [secretary@cdsgkc.org](mailto:secretary@cdsgkc.org)

Treasurer: Jerry Plummer, 816-228-9358 [treasurer@cdsgkc.org](mailto:treasurer@cdsgkc.org)

Board Members: Judi Adams, Al Hale, Lisa Packard, Mary Sawyer,  
Linda Shay, Bobbi Wojtowicz

Editor: Mary Loy Brown, 816-914-6976 [webmaster@cdsgkc.org](mailto:webmaster@cdsgkc.org)