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# CVACTA

Hello CVACTA members! I hope the spring season has been a success for you all thus far. There have been a seemingly never ending number of horse events going on in central Virginia this spring. From USEA events, to local combined tests, clinics, lessons, jumper shows, dressage shows, and trail rides there are simply more events than I can keep track of! Luckily, some of our members have contributed recaps of these events that are seen in this newsletter! In other news, we have our next meeting coming up on May 18 at the Rockville Library. For any of you that compete, or just deal with other 'mental' sports related issues make sure you mark your calendar! The speaker will be Sports Psychologist Dr. Sharon Petro of 'Head-Coaching' out of Charlottesville VA. Bring questions and be prepared to learn some neat ways of dealing with performance related issues! Hmm I wonder if she can help me lose those pre dressage test nerves?!

Anyhow, I hope to see ya'll there! Best of luck for the remainder of the spring season!

-Sarah

p.s. A reminder if you want event results featured in the newsletter please send them to me!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS!

### May:

18- CVACTA Meeting

20- Virginia Horse Trials and Three Day Event (USEA)

28-No Worries Farm CT



### June:

4-Millington Stables CT and Dressage

4- Waredaca HT (USEA)

18-Sunrise Stables HT, CT, and Dressage Show

11-12- Rubicon HT (USEA)

24-26-Surefire HT (USEA)

ROLEX KENTUCKY THREE DAY EVENT RECAP!



Well I am going to go out on a limb and guess that most of our members are familiar with the CCI\*\*\*\* event that takes place every spring in Lexington, KY. Some of you may have been there spectating, others may have been watching from home, others may have read recaps, and others may not really care about the upper echelons of eventing. But for all but the latter it is safe to say that this annual event is one many eventer look forward to like a five year old looks forward to Santa claus coming at Christmas.

Well, It would have been a very good Christmas if I was 5 and Rolex was Santa, because this year I was lucky enough to be there in person! A college friend and I decided we would rather spend our time in the great state of Kentucky, watching horses and their riders battle for the rolex title, than in the sun and surf of 'beach week' prior to our college graduation. Well to put it mildly it was a good decision. From the brilliant dressage performance from Tiana Coudray and

Ringwood Magister to Mary King's 1,2 victory, to the overwhelming emotion Sinead Halpin showed upon the completion of a BRILLIANT 3rd place finishing weekend, Rolex 2011 was an experience not to be forgotten.

The Trade fair was extensive and I had to work quite hard not to empty my bank account shopping! The riders were brilliant! I was lucky enough to be blogging for Ecogold, a company that produces horse boots and saddle pads among other things. Through this I was able to attend Q&A sessions with many of the top American and Canadian riders as well as having the opportunity to meet Phillip Dutton's wonderful groom Emma Ford and his lovely mount for the competition Fernhill Eagle.

All in all Rolex 2011 was a memorable experience! If you have the opportunity to go to Rolex at some point I urge you to do it. It is a trip you will not soon forget!

-Sarah DeLaney



Top: Heather Morris with Slate River  
Bottom: Sinead Halpin



Tiana Coudray - Ringwood Magister



Mary King - Fernhill Urco

### Clinic Recap: “Just Do It”

Magnetic, charismatic, intelligent, sharp, beautiful: Lucinda Green. Within minutes of meeting her, we knew Lucinda Green possessed all of these qualities. By the end of day two, we had memories and tools that would be with us forever. What did we learn? We learned about the three “F’s,” the riding pyramid, the way to be comfortable being uncomfortable, the safe cross-country position, the horse’s use of himself, and the way to feel empowered. Like Lucinda said by quoting Nike, we learned to “just do it.”

Focus, footwork, and fun: these are the three “F’s.” The rider must focus on the fences, the horse must master the footwork, and both must have fun. On the first day of the clinic, we practiced these three “F’s” through the use of jumps set in an arena to make us feel uncomfortable. There were plenty of super skinny fences. There were skinny fences over tarps, skinny fences set as one-strides, skinny fences to oxers, and skinny fences to barrels. There were also arrow-shaped fences in which we had to jump into or out of the point of the arrow, and there were single-barrel jumps. All of these fences were to be jumped from awkward, short approaches. Eventually, we were jumping them one after the other in rapid succession. The goal: to teach us to be comfortable being uncomfortable.

These exercises also taught us to sharpen our focus by forcing us to use our primary aids.

Otherwise known as the riding pyramid, our primary aids are our eyes, our hands, and our legs. For focus and proper use of these aids, our eyes must look at the fence, and our hands and our legs must direct the horse to the fence. Lucinda taught us to think of the horse as a tube. We were to squeeze and to direct the tube to each of the fences. These exercises also taught the horses fast footwork. We quickly learned as riders, and were instructed by Lucinda, that the horse’s head and neck should be considered his fifth leg. Lucinda also told us that a horse sees long distances from the bottom half of his eye and short distances from the top half of his eye. This means that he needs to be allowed to raise and to lower his head as he deems necessary to see the fences. For example, he needs to lower his head and to stretch his neck to see a ditch or a bank. In short, the horse needs this fifth leg, so we as riders must allow him the use of it.

Logically, this brings us to the next lesson we learned on day one: the safe cross-country position. What is the safe cross-country position? STAY BACK! Stay back before the fence, stay back over the fence, and stay back on the landing. The release comes from the arms and elbows. This position is safest for the rider no matter what happens on course, especially for stops and stumbles. This position is also safest for the horse because it allows the front end to come up while the hind end comes under. Lucinda told us to think of the horse as a seesaw: if a person sits on one side of the seesaw, the other side pops up. In

other words, if the rider sits back in the saddle, the front of the horse rises, putting him in a ready-to-jump position. Now, we were ready to conquer day two.

Day two of the Lucinda Green clinic was designed to allow us as riders some freedom. We practiced our sharpened focus, our improved aids, and our safe cross-country positions by schooling banks, terrain, water, ditches, and trakehners. The horses practiced their footwork, and each horse chose his footwork differently. Lucinda instructed the riders to decide on their pace far from the fence, then to allow the horses to make the decisions once within two strides of the fence. She said that horses make the right decisions; riders often make the wrong decisions. Practicing what Lucinda preached left both riders and horses feeling confident.

With that said, what was the biggest gain from the Lucinda Green clinic? The biggest gain from the Lucinda Green clinic was a feeling empowerment. It appeared that all of the participants left with the feeling that they could do anything, horses included. We left feeling we could all go out and just do it!

Gina and Megan