

Bulahdelah Dressage Club Inc.

Presidents Report for Year 2012

Welcome everyone to our AGM. The last year has been busy for Bulahdelah Dressage Club.

It started with a clubs forum attended by me in January. I came away with lots of information and a new perspective of BDC. We have always viewed our club as a small struggling club with a small overworked committee, the tiny cousin of Alexander Park, Hunter Valley and Manning clubs. To my surprise I found that these other clubs have similar small committees, also overworked and struggle with the exact same problems as we do. It also seems there are many more clubs of a similar size to us and of these we are doing very well.

Why are we doing well? We have enough money in the bank to cover the excess for an insurance claim – many of the other clubs don't seem to; we have a stable committee and long time workers who work in well together to run really great competitions where we regularly receive emails afterwards thanking us for a great day, both from competitors and judges; our committee is open to change and is always looking for ways to improve the club experience and the sport of Dressage.

All of our committee and longer term members welcome people to our comps with a friendly smile, a "can I help you?" and a "isn't your horse (lovely, excited, pretty, big, quiet, whatever is appropriate and positive)". This positive experience for new competitors is having a big return for us as we have more and more helpers, and returning riders bringing friends to also compete. Many are choosing to ride at our comps rather than the closer Alexander Park when our days clash because they like the atmosphere at Bulahdelah.

We have been having some success with starting new people to be pencilors, bigger numbers at comps just means needing more pencilors and Angie has been doing a great job of finding the balance between being understanding of riders needs and being firm that riders need to assist with running the comp.

We must thank our judges who teach the pencilors once they agree to have a go.

Jennifer has done a terrific job of the other hard job that is absolutely necessary to a comp: finding judges. We have been trying to find ways to be more attractive to judges and are now pushing for H level judges to come and judge at our days even though we still need to pay another judge for the higher level tests just so the H level judges can get some judging experience. No real response so far, we will wait and see.

Another judging initiative we are trying to get off the ground is to run "shadow judging tests" at our official comps. If I can get my act together to contact the right people we may get it sorted for this year. I attended the judges training day at Taree in August and the idea was well received. I would advise all riders to attend judging clinics as spectators, demonstration riders or candidate judges as there is so much to learn about our sport and how it is judged. Attending a clinic can often improve our marks in a test when we understand what the judge is looking for.

We saw the introduction of ½ marks this year. I'm still trying to remember to put the .0 on all marks that aren't .5. More practice for me please Angie.

We have money in the bank even though we have been quite extravagant with our purchases this year. We purchased a roof for the combined ownership tractor so Leo wouldn't get sunburnt slashing the ground for us. We also, after much research, purchased a shipping container to put at the showground to store our equipment. Lloyd Aquilina put down a gravel pad (with some labour from Leo) for the container at a minimal cost to us so many thanks to him. The container is locked up tight with a vandal proof lock. My storage areas at home are now empty and days when Leo and I

are not able to attend the comp all the extras we used to bring from home are now already at the ground.

Liz did much of the research and organising for the container so many thanks Liz. Liz has been a surrogate president this year, reminding me of all sorts of things from "Kerry, about the comp next week" (oh no, is it that soon) to play days and "don't forget to bring a horse". The club would not have functioned this year without Liz so we all owe her a huge thank you.

Liz also put all the work into putting us on Nominat. So far it seems to be working well.

Sheila has done an amazing job maintaining the web site. I forward on emails and info and hey presto she has it on the site. People often contact the club via the web site and Sheila is their first person to contact. Her reply emails are always so polite and encouraging (I know as she always sends me a copy) that prospective members and members with problems must be happy with the response of BDC. Sheila is also the gear steward and does the best job of friendly helpfulness and maintaining the rules. She is the main reason competitors say how well run the comps are because she encourages everyone to follow the rules, people then know where they stand and are happy.

Jo Penton was our secretary but has not really been able to contribute as much as she would have liked due to illness and moving. We hope to see more of her and Jennifer next year, coming to comps and play days.

Leo has done his usual man of all trades, setting up arenas, fixing them and putting out letters on the day, pulling down arenas, mowing arenas, running the canteen. He has a different group of helpers for each task: the Bulahdelah Lions Club for setting up and many thanks to them for their continued assistance (other clubs are amazed by our arrangement and it's simplicity); Jo Perrottet on the morning of the comp; Merryl, Tracey, Jo Jokinen, and our new helpers from last comp for pulling down arenas; Bill Onley, Ian Mason and me mowing arenas; Cheryl Smith and Pauline de Koyer our canteen champs (we'll see more of you again in the new year Pauline after your time off this year).

Also working in the canteen area is our long ago secretary now volunteer scorer Julie who makes life much easier in the scoring department. Liz, Jo and Angie appear at each comp to work with Julie adding up scores and getting them out as soon as possible, they are whizzes at the calculator and can even thread the paper now!

As you can see, everyone has more than one job, each person works in an area of their own strength and respects the strengths of others doing different jobs. Add all these people together and we have a super strong team that it's a pleasure to be a part of and to share pavlova or cheesecake and a laugh at the end of a long day.

Many thanks to our area representative, Helen Zimic who tries really hard to negotiate a fair go for all clubs in her area which is huge. Helen advises me, judges for us, brings horses to our comps and negotiates dates for us. She represents us and other clubs in our area at Dressage NSW meetings. We can never really understand how much effort, time and money she puts in for us but we all owe her big time!! Thanks Helen.

As always, thankyou Leo.

Merry Christmas to all our members, congratulations to all of our pointscore winners and to all those who won a black ribbon over the year. I look forward to an interesting and horsey New Year and will be pleased to catch up with all our BDC friends at the next play day or comp.

Cheers, Kerry.