

From the CEO's Desk.

Happy New Year! And what a big year it is going to be. The Athens Opening Ceremony is now less than seven months away.

Governance Review

First the latest news: Yesterday (Sunday, 18 January 2004), not only did the train get to Darwin, but the long-awaited EFA governance reforms arrived as well. The "shareholders" of the EFA Ltd. (the seven Branches) voted 6 out of 7 in favour of changing the constitution of the Federation. For the first time in its 50-odd-year history, the National Board will not include the chairs of the various Branch Committees. Instead, the Branch Chairs will meet and elect five directors to make up the Board. These directors may then appoint up to two other directors, if required to complement the skill spectrum of the Board.

This amendment to the constitution is the most radical change ever to occur in the governance system of the Federation. Several attempts have been made before, especially in the last 12 years, to change the way in which the Federation is governed. The new system will be reviewed at the Annual Meeting in 2006 when the seven Branches will be required to again vote with at least 6 out of the 7 in favour of continuing with the implemented reforms.

The idea behind the change is to get an "independent" and skills-based Board that can focus on national issues and show leadership for the sport as a whole. Directors, once elected, cannot be members of Branch Boards, cannot chair National Discipline Committees or be paid employees of the Federation or of its Branches. Members who presently hold such positions can, however, stand for election and would then be required to resign from these positions after being elected. Those of you who are interested in standing for the Board can get an idea of what is expected by looking at documents available from http://www.efanational.com/content/documents/board_policies.htm. We will issue nomination papers and a template for a resume in the next few days.

National Board Meeting

The Shareholders' Meeting was followed by a Board meeting that was probably the last for many of those present. There wasn't too much breath-taking business to deal with, but I should mention that the Board

- made changes to Committee By-laws of the Constitution as a result of the Governance Review;
- revised the terms of reference for two of the Board Committees
- reviewed draft Medication Control Policies that will require approval for the AOC and ASC before they can be ratified;
- made or ratified a number of National Committee appointments;
- discussed financial reports to 31 December 2003 and latest estimates for the whole financial year, which will be affected by the cost of a Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) appeal in Victoria and the cost of the relocation of the National Office from Adelaide to Sydney; and
- approved a meeting of EFA Carriage Driving Groups with the ACDS in late March to work out the way to, and the steps required for, the formation of an EFA National Carriage Driving Committee.

National Dressage Meeting

The National Dressage Committee met last Saturday. We will publish a summary of what came out of it on the web as soon as it is available. This will include further advice and suggestions on Dressage arenas. I will, however, mention that there was a fair amount of discussion about whether to re-introduce grading points for Preliminary Dressage tests. A review of the grading system is due this year in any case, so the Committee will issue a survey to gauge the feeling on this subject. Please think and talk about it with your fellow riders. I am sure your Dressage Committee would welcome input.

Dressage Rulebooks

Rulebooks are selling like hotcakes. They are selling so well that the processing of orders is keeping Monique and Siobhan quite busy and away from other work that also needs to be done. Please note that there will be a few changes to the rulebook content. We will update the file on the web and also publish the amended pages separately, together with a listing of changes, so you can simply download, print and replace just those pages. On the subject of downloading: You need to have Adobe Reader 5 or later to open the rulebook PDF file, because the National Dressage Committee has asked me to place certain copy restrictions on the file. You can get the latest version of Adobe Reader from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>. Yes, this is a large file and will take time (and space) on your hard disk. On the other hand, the latest versions have so many improvements that will make the download worth it while.

Dressage Tests

Please note that there have been some minor corrections to some of the tests. The latest versions are on our web at <http://www.efanational.com/content/documents/rules.htm>.

Horses for the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games

The Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (RDAA) is looking for Elementary- to Medium-standard horses for the Australian team. There must be owners/riders out there in our Dressage community who would be willing to provide a suitable horse and travel as a groom to Athens with the Australian Team. I would if I had the right horse and would start brushing up my *Ἑλληνιχ*. The Paralympic Equestrian Games are a lot of fun. Just ask any of the generous owners who helped us out for Sydney 2000.

2004 Eventing Rules

The new rules together with summaries of changes and other documents are now available for download from our web at <http://www.efanational.com/content/documents/rules.htm#Eventing>.

Richard Weis reports

A few days ago, I received an e-mail from Richard reporting on his recent European tour. You may like to read what he has to say. Just go to

http://www.efanational.com/content/attachments/news/401_Weis_Dressage_Forum_2003.pdf (PDF - 23KB).

Upcoming Events

You can find a list of major events, some of them with links to their own web site, at <http://www.efanational.com/content/events/calendar.htm>. Next week, of course, it will be busy at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre (SIEC), with a clinic for FEI Stewards conducted with Sandra Sillcox, Steward-General for Canada, an FEI clinic for Jumping Course Designers with Leopoldo Palacios (VEN) and, of course, the Tempo Summer Classic jumping show. This includes the two classes of the Pacific League Jumping Word Cup Final. The "final final" on Sunday, 01 February is also a competition at which jumpers can gain a Certificate of Capability for the Athens Olympic Games. As you know, Australia has qualified for an Individual entry in Jumping and a team of five in Eventing. We will have to wait until 02 May to find out whether we have an Individual Dressage qualification.

Well, there is work to be done, so I leave you to it.

Make it a good year!

Franz Venhaus