

# Why Does My Horse Do That?!? - *Psychology for the Equestrian*

Presented by: Sandy Venneman, PhD - November 19, 2011

**\*USDF University Credit Pending\***

Why can my trainer make my horse look so light? Why can't my students get their horse on the outside rein? And of course, "Why does my horse do \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank)."

On November 19, 2011, ADA will be hosting a very informative and fun seminar with Dr. Venneman. Dr. Venneman is an experimental psychologist who combines her knowledge of psychology with her knowledge of horses to help riders reach their potential. She currently teaches psychology and biology at the University of Houston-Victoria. This program was very well received at the USDF annual meeting a couple of years ago as one of the University education programs. Dr. Venneman is well traveled in her clinics, including an invitation to speak at Club Ecuestre La Ronda in Guatemala last summer.

**About the Program:** Understand how your horse learns to behave in certain ways and start problem solving the very next time you ride. The key elements of learning theory are actually very simple, but also powerful tools for training. The information presented in this session is geared toward riders teaching their horse, but also apply just as well to instructors teaching their clients. Become a better rider, instructor, or student by understanding and learning to utilize the following concepts.

**\*Operant Conditioning**

- Positive Reinforcement
- Negative Reinforcement (Escape)
- Punishment
- Penalty
- Extinction

**\*Classical Conditioning**

- Refining aids
- Understanding blocks to training



**About our speaker:** Dr. Venneman is an experimental psychologist who combines her knowledge of psychology with her knowledge of horses to help riders reach their potential. She currently teaches psychology and biology at The University of Houston-Victoria in South Texas. She also conducts research and has researched USEF members to understand personality factors of equestrians and how they relate to achievement and satisfaction. In addition to teaching at the university, she trains horses, instructs and gives mounted and un-mounted clinics nationwide and abroad. You can get a feel for her application of the science of learning to horses by reading a summary of her USDF National Convention presentation in *The USDF Connection*, February 2006, or a more extensive sample in

*Practical Horseman*, January 2007. Her specialty is practical dressage. She teaches riders from any discipline who recognize dressage training will benefit their mounts and their riding. People who attend her clinics and talks always comment on the practical applications they learn and how much fun they have learning.

**Location:** Rio Cibolo Ranch, 1101 Ullrich Rd., Marion, TX (Just off I-10) For directions visit: <http://www.riociboloranch.com/>

8:30-9:00am	Registration
9:00-12:00am	Lecture, PowerPoint with Q&A
12:00-1:00pm	BBQ Lunch (please RSVP so we order enough food!)
1:00-5:00pm	Riding Demonstrations

**Cost:** ADA members \$30, Non-members \$35, **Demonstration Riders:** \$60 (includes pen)

**RSVP required for Auditors and Demo Riders:** ADA Education Chair, Carolyn Vandenberg, [Vandenberg@gvvc.com](mailto:Vandenberg@gvvc.com) or 210 215 2423 by November 13, 2011.

**Cancellation Policy:** Fees are refundable for cancellations prior to November 16th. Fees are not refundable on or after November 16th.