

The Contact

Keeping members informed.



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Do you have news you'd like to share? Submit your stories and photos to:

newsletter@nebraskadressage.org

Calendar of Events

January 24-25	Shan Lawton Clinic	Middle Cross Stables Roca, NE
January 31	Rider Fitness Workshop	The Trade Center Lincoln, NE
February 9	NDA Board Meeting	Misty's (Havelock)
February 27 - March 1	Clayton Martin Clinic	Stillwaters Hickman, NE
March 9	NDA Board Meeting	Misty's (Havelock)
April 3-4	Shaggy Dressage Schooling Show	Lancaster Event Center
April 9-11	International and CDI	Century Link Omaha
April 13	NDA Board Meeting	Misty's (Havelock)
May 2	Middle Cross Schooling Show	Middle Cross Stables Roca, NE
May 16-17	Reg. 4 Adult Clinic ft. Betsy Steiner & Kathy Connelly	Providence Farm Palmyra, NE
May 29	Cornhusker Classic Schooling Show	Lancaster Event Center
May 30-31	Cornhusker Classic	Lancaster Event Center

Hello NDA

Members, & Happy 2015!



I look forward to hearing from you—
and have a great ride!

Melissa Ward
2015 NDA President
president@nebraskadressage.org

President's Note

I am honored and excited to serve as your President this year, inspired in no small part by the brilliant group of people working together on the Board of Directors. Your 2015 NDA Board is filled to the brim with enthusiastic, resourceful, innovative people with one thing in common: we want you and your horse to have your best year yet.

As the snow sticks to our boots and the water buckets freeze over, it can be hard to picture ourselves preparing for show season, but it will be here before we know it! The competitions committee is already hard at work preparing for the 2015 Cornhusker Classic shows, which will be at the Lancaster Event Center, May 29–31.

(Please make sure you renew your membership NOW, as both you and your horse must be registered with NDA prior to earning any scores for year-end awards. Take care of it now and don't think about it again all year!)

This spring also brings a very special event for us here in Nebraska: the USDF Region 4 Adult Clinic. NDA is thrilled to be hosting our Region's clinic, which brings not one but TWO world-class Olympic trainers, Kathy Connelly and Betsy Steiner, right to our backyard for a weekend of intensive, auditor-focused education. Keep an eye out for more info coming soon, but save the date: May 16–17 at Providence Farm in Palmyra, NE.

This is just the tip of the iceberg for 2015, you guys! My goal as your President for 2015 is to foster what I believe is NDA's greatest asset: our community. NDA exists for YOU, and I want you to feel like you belong to more than just a GMO—you belong to a family.

So, please: write to us and share your stories of success with your horse! Send us photos for the website. Write an article for The Contact about your favorite breed organization, rescue, or club. Know somebody who might like to run an NDA-recognized schooling show? Send them our way! Have an idea for a social gathering, educational event, or award? I want to hear about it. You are always welcome to contact me directly at president@nebraskadressage.org, and remember—every NDA member is invited to attend our board meetings at any time.

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Jr./YR

My name is Chloe Brinson, I ride an Appaloosa gelding named Sundown Dream, and I began riding dressage about three years ago. Ever since I began doing dressage I, just like countless others, decided that I wanted to make it to the “big leagues”. Everyone needs to start somewhere, so I decided to start with the 2014 Region 4 Championships. I knew with scores in the upper 60’s from the year before that I would be able to qualify, the only problem standing in my way were finances.

I decided to apply for the 2014 NDA Jr/YR scholarship to help pay our way to Mason City, Iowa. I wrote my essay and learned that I had indeed been chosen to receive the \$500 scholarship to aid in my journey to Regionals. We put most of the money towards the entry fees and the remaining went towards the gas needed to drive there.

Regionals was unlike any show I’d ever been to, so many big, fancy horses in one spot! The night before my championship class we settled Pugsley into his stall and let him relax after a long drive to Mason City. The morning of the Training level championship class Pugsley and I took a walk around the grounds and I got my real first look at all the high level horses. I’ve never seen so many high quality, well bred, well trained horses in one place.



Warming up before the championship class was quite an adventure, even after a long lunge session, Pugsley was high strung and excited. We entered the warm up ring, only to have Grand Prix horses doing flying changes right next to us, sending Pugsley into a panic. I could just hear my little 15.1 hand Appaloosa “ooh” and “ahh” over the giant 16-plus hand Warmbloods! I was just as distracted by the beauty of the horses and riders as Pugsley was! As I began to focus on our upcoming task, I realized that convincing Pugsley to behave and focus wasn’t going to be easy! His trot was accompanied by bucks, his canter was more like a series of small rears, and he wouldn’t relax to do any sort of stretching.

I took a deep breath and walked into the arena, waited for the judge to ring the bell, and hoped for the best. It wasn’t our best ride, nor was it our worst. We finished 12th in a class of roughly 20 other horse and rider combinations, not as good as I hoped, but better than I expected! Regionals was an eye-opening experience, I realized that climbing to the top isn’t going to be easy and I also realized that the piaffe scares Pugsley. I can’t wait to qualify and go to regionals in 2015 and learn even more about dressage!



Adult Amateur

Laureen Van Norman

First, I would like to thank the NDA board for awarding me a scholarship this year. When the opportunity to apply was announced, little did I expect to win. What a nice surprise because as we all know, this is not an inexpensive sport. My goals require instruction and training on a regular basis and I have committed to budgeting for those expenses. Any help is much appreciated. I applaud NDA for establishing this program and would encourage others to apply. I am also anxious to hear how others have used their scholarship funds.

In applying, I stated I would use the funds toward riding with Kathy Connelly at a clinic in May, 2014. Unfortunately, I applied late and was only able to get one lesson with her. The good news is I had money left over to apply to lessons with Debbie McDonald. What a year to have the opportunity to ride with these two top clinicians!

Providence Farm was the site of both clinics. Since it was the more recent, I will talk more about the Debbie McDonald clinic. We all know her as a past member of various US teams, having ridden her big red mare, Brentina, to WEG, the Olympics and many other major international competitions. She is somewhat retired from riding now and focuses primarily on High Performance athletes for USEF. As NDA's own Jami Kment has been identified as a High Performance prospect, we are fortunate that a clinician of Debbie's caliber will consider coming to the heartland to teach.

There was a wide range of experience in the riders and horses from around Region IV. Included were Casey Blum of Lincoln who rode her own Eschaton at training/first level up to Amy Stuhr Patterson from Kansas City riding her Wieske at Intermediare to Grand Prix. Jami Kment also rode Zania and continued her work on the Grand Prix movements. I always appreciate the opportunity to watch and interact with dressage enthusiasts from other parts of Region IV.. We have so much in common in our goals to be the best riders and horsemen that we can be. Much can be learned from auditing and I made a point of being back in my seat observing when I wasn't riding. No matter the training level of the horse and rider the basics of thoroughness, suppleness and engagement were repeatedly emphasized.

(Continued on the following page.)

2014 Scholarship Reports, continued

Laureen Van Norman

I found Debbie McDonald to be an excellent teacher who with her unparalleled eye also has a great sense of humor! She emphasized and helped me grow in my understanding of the frequency the half halt is needed and what a subtle aid it should be. In trotting the long side for example, approximately every 3rd step she asked me to squeeze my shoulder blades together. The effect was to engage my core which in turn asked Monty to engage his body to a greater degree. The result was improved self-carriage. She pushed me to get out of my comfort zone and really let him show his expression by using the half halt instead of just holding him back. The result was a big expressive trot which felt like flying! It gave new meaning to the idea of “riding up to the bridle”!

We also worked on straightness, a concept which challenges riders of every level. I continue to try to learn the differences between bend, flexion, shoulder-fore and straightness and the place each holds in effective riding of any kind. My two sessions at this clinic were very helpful to me in this regard.

We at NDA have many opportunities to see top clinicians in our area. There are several who regularly teach in the Kansas City area. The USDF Adult Clinic will be held at Providence Farm in May, 2015 and will feature Kathy Connelly and Betsy Steiner. Debbie McDonald has promised to return in the fall of 2015. Don't miss the chance to ride or audit whenever you can. I always come away inspired to keep improving in this challenging sport we have all fallen in love with. Thanks again to the NDA board for awarding me this scholarship.

2015 SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION



NDA will be awarding three \$500 scholarships to a deserving Jr./YR, Adult Amateur and Professional. These scholarships may be used for riding clinics or any kind of dressage related educational event that you wish to attend.

Application may be found online, under “Forms and Documents.”

Complete applications must be emailed to jfucinaro@gmail.com by May 1, 2015. The NDA Board of Directors will review your application and have a decision announced by May 15th.

PRO



2014 SCHOLARSHIP REPORTS

Angie McClelland

Last summer I received an educational scholarship from NDA (huge thank you to NDA for your generosity!) I used the scholarship money to help offset costs to travel with my mare, Ledgie, to train with Sarah and Clayton Martin at their lovely facility in Blanca, Colorado. 2014 was the second year that I ventured west into the mountains for 10 days of daily instruction and intensive horse time.

The Martins' facility, Taka Chi Dressage Stables, is nestled at the base of Mount Blanca in southern Colorado. The high desert of that area has a drier, cooler climate and is a welcome change from the humidity of Nebraska summers. However, at over 7,000 feet, the thin atmosphere takes some getting used to--it's a bit alarming when a walk up a slight hill requires a rest stop to catch one's breath!

The daily routine for a visiting student is a daily lesson with either Sarah or Clayton, time to watch other rides and lessons, and generally enjoy being immersed in a high quality training program. Sarah and Clayton have a very holistic approach to horse management, focusing not only on training, but also the mental and physical well-being of their equine athletes. Horses are given as much pasture time as possible, support with natural horsemanship techniques as necessary, and cross training including hacking on trail rides to keep the horses fresh and engaged in their work.

Ten days goes by in a big hurry, but it's worth it to have the chance to really delve into some training concepts that would be difficult to address at a three-day clinic. This year, we focused on using a combination of natural horsemanship techniques and classical exercises to try and create more consistent, quiet responses to the aids. And of course, to help my horse, I have to improve as well! My continual goals are

better balance and strength through the core.

I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet other students who also made the trip out to train. This year, there were students from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Colorado, as well as fellow NDA members Melissa Ward, Heidi Helmer, and Michelle Rohman. It was so fun to watch the other riders on their educational journeys and to learn from their lessons along with mine.

Thank you again, NDA, for your generous scholarship! I really appreciate having such a supportive community of fellow dressage enthusiasts!

Sarah and Clayton Martin own and operate Taka Chi Dressage Stables, based in Blanca, Colorado. Both are USDF certified instructors through fourth level and Sarah is a faculty member for the certified instructor program. Sarah and Clayton teach clinics around the US, and travel to Lincoln every 2-3 months to teach their Nebraska students. If you are interested in auditing or riding in a clinic, contact Sandie McConnell at rsmac@inebraska.com.

Visit their website at:
sarahmartindressage.com

What are...

Opportunity Classes?

If you are not a member of USEF, you may have run into the “Non-Member” USEF Fee that you must pay to enter into a USEF Liscensed competition. Opportunity Classes are your chance to enter into a USDF/ USEF/NDA Competition without paying those costly Non-Member Fees! They are intended to introduce new competitors to the world of recognized competitions, but they are open to anyone. While Opportunity Classes are great, the scores do NOT count towards year end awards for USDF/USEF. Look for these classes offered at the Cornhusker Classic! To read more about Opportunity Classes, see USEF Rule: GR 821.

Q & A
with NDA

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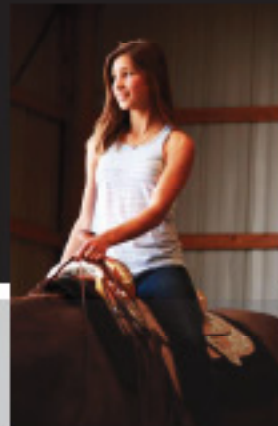
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Photos of you & your horse . . .

Photos by Becky Hutchins

We are very pleased to announce that Topline Photography will be offering photography services at the show for a very special fee of \$25 per rider.

Proceeds will benefit the Lancaster County Horse 4-H Program. Reservations preferred in advance but also accepted day of show prior to first ride time.

Fourth Annual Middle Cross Schooling Show
a fundraiser for lancaster county horse 4-h



An NDA Recognized Schooling Show
(see nebraskadressage.org)

Register by April 24th
Judge will be announced soon

May 2-3, 2015

Middle Cross Stables (the historic Lowell Boomer site)
500 Sprague Road, Roca, NE (just West of Hwy. 77)

Traditional and Western Dressage will be offered as well as Rider Tests and group classes.
NDA and USDF membership not required unless you are qualifying for year-end awards.
Questions? Contact Jennifer Rawlinson at jcrawlson@windstream.net or 402-560-3319.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

USDF CONVENTION REPORT

*for more details,
visit usfdressage.blogspot.com*

I had a fantastic trip to Boston and was honored to represent NDA and carry our votes at the USDF Convention from December 3-6. It was great to network with other GMO representatives and hear what works for their groups and what keeps their organizations running. I was very inspired to come back and do more, smaller, educational events for NDA to really increase the amount of participating members we have.

As NDA's representative, I carried four votes for our membership (proportional to the size of our GMO). It was my job to attend as many meetings as I could, as delegated by our Region 4 Representatives. All of us from Region 4 met in the morning and divided up how many meetings we could individually attend. At the end, we all came together and discussed each meeting we sat in on. I attended meetings for Region 4, Adult Programs, Youth Education and Youth Programs, Historical Committee, GMO Committee and Competitions Forum.

Region 4 will be hosting a CDI* in OMAHA! This CDI* will be in conjunction with the International Omaha Horse Show on April 9-11 at the Century Link Center. The space is very limited, so if you are considering competing, send in entries ASAP!

USDF encouraged each of us to at-

tend the USDF/USEF Rule Change Open Forum, so that we could have an understanding of the new rule changes or modifications. Several big changes that you might want to look into are the changes to saddle pad logos during competition and Opportunity Classes in licensed shows. On the USDF Homepage, you can find a link for all the latest changes.

The Round Table discussions were incredibly useful. This gives GMO Representatives an opportunity to discuss issues they have in their organization, successes that they found, methods of increasing volunteerism, and so on. I am proud to say that I believe NDA is right on track with some of the bigger GMOs! We might be smaller, but I do feel like we have a great membership.

We were encouraged to remind our membership that USDF is here to serve us! E-trak is an excellent tool for educational events, and the new "On the Levels" is a fantastic tool—it's a dressage video library that includes examples of all the new tests with commentary from top US trainers and judges. It is only \$20/year for unlimited access. Available as an app, or online!

USDF is also asking us to submit nominations for Year End Awards to USDF. There are so many awards available to GMOs to recognize

the work of volunteers, it would be great for NDA to get some recognition for its excellent talent! USDF is working on creating an online form to make this process easier.

On top of the meetings, the whole Convention was jam-packed with educational sessions, including a great lecture by Dr. Hilary Clayton called "Going in Circles: The Biomechanics of Working Your Horse in Circles," which will be featured in the USDF Connection magazine. Other big features included lectures by Kathy Connelly and Betsy Steiner (look for them in May at Providence Farm!), Kristi Wysocki and Bill Solyntjes, and many great sessions on nutrition, health and saddle fit.

I am so thankful to NDA for sending me to Boston as our representative. It was an incredible experience. If anyone would like my full report and expense list, please email me, I'd love to share. Many thanks, and Happy New Year! - Jane Fucinaro



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Jami Kment

*USDF Gold, Silver & Bronze Medalist
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Board Member Bio

Emily Johnson



My name is Emily and I am an addict. A horse addict, that is! I am a committed (and hence, subsequently crazy) horse lover and a connoisseur of anything and everything horse! The story of how I came into a life of horses does not have an uncommon beginning. Motivated by my wild, uninhibited love for the horse -- or the 'horsey' as my little girl lips would sound with delight -- I was the quintessential young girl listing 'pony' as the first thing on my Christmas list. And, as I know you can relate, that horse enthusiastic little girl is still alive and well in me. It's just that she has now grown into woman form, which comes with other expectations -- like, for instance, getting a job. Thankfully, I have been able to circumvent ever feeling like I have a "job" as I have been blessed that my avocation has also become my vocation!

I originally hail from Colorado. It was there that I started my business, Mountain Rose Horsemanship, which has now proudly called Nebraska home for the past three years. My background with horses is predominantly western based with influences in natural horsemanship, colt starting, remedial horses, trail, and ranch horsemanship. I enjoyed some exposure to english dressage over the years (back before we called it "english" dressage), but it wasn't until I realized the potential of the symbiotic blending of both worlds -- east and west, that I found my new love in western dressage. I feel so

satiated now that my enthusiasm for the western horse and the western way of life can so beautifully intersect with my esteem for the history, profound principles and tried and true training that is classical dressage. Bliss!

Besides western dressage, my overarching passion, as a horsemanship instructor, is for equipping both horses and humans for success on their journey toward individual wholeness and ultimate partnership. This has encouraged my zeal for the new and exciting discipline of western dressage, as I believe it has expanded the potential for partnership with our horses even further. And, now allows for that dream of partnership to be realized in the show arena as well.

This past year I have also realized another dream with the arrival of my first colt -- of the two legged sort, that is! My husband and I welcomed our first child, a son named Soren, last January. And as ever parent before me knows, there is nothing as awe-inspiring, joy-evoking and heart expanding as the love of a child. He is, in fact, even better than horses.

So, that is a little about me. I am so pleased to be welcomed to the NDA Board of Directors and eagerly look forward to serving the NDA membership and their horses, alike. I hope to have the chance to meet and visit with you at an upcoming event soon -- I am sure my horse crazy, little girl and your horse crazy, little girl will have plenty to talk about!



2014 PRESIDENT'S AWARD

I am proud to announce that the recipient of the 2014 President's Award is Tish Gade-Jones.

Every year, the President's Award is given to a member of NDA who has demonstrated exemplary voluntary service to NDA, and Tish is no exception. Tish served as Treasurer on the board for the past three years and went above and beyond what the office required. She also played a huge role in helping the juniors organize their events this year, from t-shirt sales to graciously hosting our Christmas party.

Her unparalleled professionalism, dedication, and support in service to NDA makes her a more than deserving recipient of this year's award.

Thank you, Tish!

-Katie Miller, 2014 NDA President



CONGRATS AND THANK YOU, TISH!



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- FEI Open Speed
- High Child/Adult Classic
- Low Junior/Amateur Classic
- High Junior/Amateur Classic
- National Open Classic
- FEI International Omaha Grand Prix

Horse Show Officials:

- Lloyd Landkamer - Dressage Manager
- Anthony D'Ambrosio - Course Designer
- John McQueen - Horse show Manager
- Jon Garner FEI - Horse show Manager



For more competitions please go to our website at www.internationalomaha.com

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Friday, April 10 at 9:00 AM FEI Intermediate CDI*

Saturday, April 11 at 9:00 AM FEI Intermediate Freestyle CDI*



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