



# The Contact

FALL 2017



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## Letter from the President

Hello NDA Members!

I can't wait for our Annual Banquet and Meeting, it's a whole new concept this year, we are trying brunch! The menu looks fantastic and I am so looking forward to seeing everyone and celebrating a year of success with each of you.

If you are interested in running for the Board, please let me know ASAP. I'd love to include someone who has fundraising or financial experience. NDA is growing faster than our volunteers can keep up, so please, please consider helping out.

If you have questions, the NDA Board has been hard at work to create "job descriptions" that clearly state expectations and duties of each position. I'd love to share that with you if you're interested.

Again, looking forward to celebrating our dressage community's accomplishments at the November Annual Banquet.

All my best,  
**Jane Fucinaro**  
*2017 NDA President*

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## A Note from the Editor

I am excited to connect with you all again at the awards brunch this year. I will once again be taking photos of the event and anyone wishing photos with their trophies, so feel free to dress accordingly for photos!

Additionally, I would love to hear any stories throughout your year, so please take a moment to think of your favorite moment with your horse this year, in or out of the show ring! I would love to highlight our personal victories together as a community.

See you all soon!  
**Michaela Schieffer, Editor**



## In Front of the Leg

by Shan Lawton

What does it mean for the horse to be in front of the leg? We often hear that a certain horse is “so behind the leg!” You can tell from the speaker’s tone of voice that this is a bad thing. Or a rider declares that the test was going great until the horse got behind her leg and it was just downhill from there. Clearly behind the leg is bad, so in front of the leg must be good. The instructor says, “He’s not in front of your leg. Get him in front of your leg.” This must mean that if the horse is in front of your leg it will be better than it is now. What is the difference? How can you tell if the horse is in front of the leg?

One good definition of “in front of the leg” is that it means that the horse wants to get to the other end of the arena. A horse that is in front of the leg goes forward on its own. Your leg is a driving aid, but if the horse goes only because you keep applying the driving aid it is not in front of the leg.

A horse that goes only because you keep applying the driving aid is always waiting for you to stop. This horse is behind the leg. If you must use your leg all the time to keep the horse going you can’t use it for anything else. There won’t be any bending, there won’t be any effective half halts, and there won’t be any “gears” within the gaits. All of which means that there won’t be any progress through the levels of the training scale.

How do we get the horse in front of the leg? Most young horses are more or less in front of the leg to start with. Horses naturally tend to want to go forward and will move away from pressure on their skin. So when you sit on a horse and touch its sides with your legs it most likely will move forward. You reward this response by removing or lightening the leg pressure. (You can inhibit or frustrate the desire to go forward by tensing your body or

restricting the horse with the bit, so it is important to stay relaxed and elastic when applying the driving leg aid.) If the horse does not understand the driving leg aid, you can use the whip (presumably the horse will already understand the whip from longeing and other work on the ground).

If the horse still does not understand, you can have a person on the ground assist with a longe whip. (You know that gorgeous trot that the 3-year-olds do at the German auctions? The auction riders are truly amazing professionals, but not infrequently that horse is in the arena only because there were people outside the arena with longe whips.) I want to emphasize here that I’m not talking about beating the horse with either a dressage whip or a longe whip. If a young horse is not responding to a light touch from the dressage whip or from the sight or sound of a longe whip behind it you

probably want to regroup and spend some time regaining the horse's trust and attention on the ground.

Once the horse does understand moving forward from the whip and from the leg, you use those driving aids to encourage the horse to maintain brisk gaits on its own. As each ride progresses, and as the training process progresses, the horse should be willing to maintain the forwardness—the quality of being in front of the leg—more easily and for longer periods on its own.

A horse with more training, with an understanding of the leg, may begin the ride feeling a little slow or behind the leg. To minimize this portion of the ride, make sure you give the horse ample time to walk (preferably on a loose rein) to loosen up. If the horse is young or has just come in from turnout, walk time on a loose rein might be as little as 5 or 10 minutes. With an older horse, especially in cold weather, more time may be appropriate. Even in the walk on a loose rein, though, the horse should understand that it must move forward. It should feel like it is carrying you forward all the time and has a sense of purpose and a desire to get somewhere.

When you start to pick up the reins the horse should continue to move forward enthusiastically at the walk, responding to your leg just as comfortably and eagerly as it did while walking on a loose rein. If the horse slows down it could be because you have taken your leg off, or because you have taken contact rather than allowing the horse to make the contact with the rein, or because the horse is responding to the rein more than to the leg (probably out of concern that you will take excessive contact).

It is important at this point in the ride (as earlier if you need to encourage the horse to walk forward on the loose rein) that you reinforce the walk rhythm when using the leg as a driving aid by applying each leg in turn to ask the horse to move the corresponding hind leg off the ground more quickly. You should also be sure to ask for more forward for 3 or 4 steps in a row. One step more forward does not necessarily mean that the second step will catch up to the first, so you have to ask for the second step. Two steps do not necessarily mean that the forwardness should continue, so you have to ask for the third, and maybe a fourth. At that point you will have established a new brisker tempo and a new better energy level. This may establish the forward, in front of the leg, walk that you want or it may last for only a few steps before you have to repeat the process. Two three repetitions should have the horse in front of your leg

at the walk. The horse may need to be reminded occasionally that the task at hand is self-propulsion at the walk, but the reminders should not need to be constant.

It is important to allow your hands and your hips to follow the horse's motion in the walk. The horse lifts your seat bone when the corresponding hind leg is on the ground, and the horse's head takes your hands forward and allows them to come back with each step. Because the horse's hind legs move your seat your hips follow a bilateral, side to side motion. Because the horse's neck and head move your hands, both hands move forward and back together (not alternately) to follow the motion. If you try to push the horse forward by pushing your seat forward you actually inhibit the hind legs. And if you don't follow the motion of the head and neck with your hands you inhibit the motion of the horse's back, which will cause stopping or a lateral walk.

Once the horse is in front of your leg at the walk you can ask for trot. Assuming you have an attentive horse walking forward and in front of your leg, if you just let your knees come away from the saddle and close your lower leg the horse will trot. Depending on the horse, the trot could be very lackluster and lazy or could be exploding with energy. We never ever want to discourage energy. We do, however, want to encourage rideability, whatever the horse has offered.

If the horse feels really forward, you do not need to worry about getting the horse in front of your leg. You do, however, want to pay attention to the tempo. If the horse feels like it really wants to carry you forward and really wants to get to the other end of the arena, the tempo may be perfect for that horse or it may be too quick. As a general rule, if the horse offers a slow tempo you ask for a quicker tempo, and if the horse offers a quick tempo you ask for a slower tempo. If the tempo seems perfect then you want to make sure it can be adjusted, that it can be made a little quicker or a little slower.

If the horse starts out slow or lazy in the trot, or is curling its neck and avoiding the contact, it is not in front of the leg. Every horse is entitled to warm-up time, so you can't expect its best trot at the beginning of the ride. What you can expect is responsiveness. When you touch the horse's side with your leg, you should get at least a little increase in energy. You want to remember that as a rule in the trot your inside leg is your driving leg; in the rising trot you put your leg on as you sit, which is when the inside leg is on the ground. If you want the horse to take longer, bigger strides you keep your leg on longer. If you want the horse to take quicker strides you take your leg off more quickly. And

each time you want to ask the horse to go more forward you should ask for 3 consecutive strides. As in the walk, any result you get will last for a few strides before the horse tries to revert to the trot it originally offered, so you should plan to repeat the process a few times to get a good result. Once you have the trot you want, you can test it by asking for more forward. If the horse goes forward readily without bracing or hollowing, that's good. Then you can ask the horse to lengthen the strides and then to shorten the strides a little bit without bracing or hollowing or decreasing the energy.

If the horse can't go forward because it has trouble staying round in the trot, you can go back to the walk and ride leg yields and turns on the forehand to supple the pelvis and lumbar region. This will increase the mobility of the hind legs, which will enable the horse to accept the contact better and stay round.

Once the horse has started to feel responsive and purposeful in the trot you can go on to the canter. If the horse is in front of your leg at the trot, the transition to canter should be easy. If it is not, go back to the trot and make sure the horse is in front of your leg at the trot, then try the transition again. The trot should have as much energy as you expect from the canter before you ask for the transition. Remember that in the canter as a rule your outside leg is the driving leg. The outside hind leg is on the ground on beat one of the canter, and that is when you want to apply your leg to activate that leg. Beat one is when the horse's poll is at the highest point, so if you have trouble feeling which leg is on the ground just watch the poll and apply your outside leg accordingly. As in the walk and trot, ask for more forward in the canter by applying the driving leg aid for 3 strides in a row, repeating as necessary until the horse willingly maintains the forwardness.

Transitions between trot and canter are good both for horses that are nervous and quick and for those that are lazy. On the 20m circle at the trot do the transition to the canter on the center line, and then back to trot, also on the center line. Repeat the exercise as many times as necessary to improve the horse's attentiveness to the aids for the transition, varying the amount of time in each gait—sometimes half a circle, sometimes a full circle, sometimes a circle and a half. Remember in this exercise, as always when riding canter-trot transitions, that going from canter to trot or from trot to canter is just a change of rhythm, between a 2 beat gait and a 3 beat gait, and not a change of energy. You can ride a half halt to get the horse's attention and help it with balance

before asking for the transition, but not to slow the horse down. Similarly when going from canter to trot, the half halt can be a preparation for the transition by improving balance and attentiveness, but it should not decrease the energy of the canter, and it is not the aid for the trot. All you want the horse to do in the downward transition is to change from a 3 beat gait to a 2 beat gait, so you can ask simply by stepping into your outside stirrup.

After some canter-trot transitions the horse should be able to lengthen and shorten the strides in the canter. Even a training level horse can do this a little bit. When you go back to the trot the horse should continue to move forward freely and willingly, responding promptly to any request from your leg for more energy. Then the horse is in front of your leg! ❖



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## It's Almost Brunch Time!

We hope you are making plans to attend this year's NDA awards program and annual meeting. We will be having a brunch this year at the Ashland Country Club on Sunday, November 19. If you've not attended before, it's always an enjoyable time to connect with the dressage community and to start your Christmas shopping with items from the spectacular silent auction.. The registration form to attend the brunch is included.

Please register by **November 10, 2017.**

If you still have trophies, please contact **Lauren Van Norman** to return them.

### *Run for the Board of Directors!*

We are looking for people with great communication skills that are enthusiastic about growing our dressage community. If you want to be instrumental in the growth of our organization, please submit a bio and run for the NDA Board of Directors. We have 2 open General board positions, in addition to our Junior Board member position and our Vice President position coming available.

People that have fundraising experience is a huge bonus, in addition to candidates with a bookkeeping background.

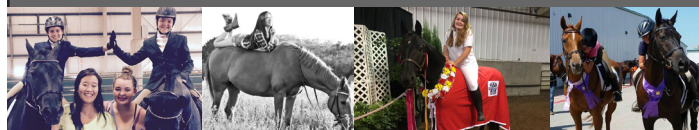
**Email Jane Fucinaro ASAP** if you would like to run for the board. We need your bio right away to be able to vote at the Awards Brunch!

NDA presents many nice awards and is adding to the Schooling Show Medal Series this year. Western dressage competitors will want to check the new handbook when it comes out in the near future.

Hope to see you all November 19 at the Ashland Country Club. Registration & payment due no later than November 10, 2017. Checks may be made payable to NDA.

In a final note about the awards brunch, please send any photos you have from the past year to our Junior Board member, Miya Higgins, who is compiling a slideshow for the event.

All photos can be sent to her email, [junior@nebraskadressage.org](mailto:junior@nebraskadressage.org).



Doors open at 10:30, brunch starts at 11:00, business meeting will start at noon with awards to follow. The price for the buffet is \$17.50 and \$10 for children 10 and under.

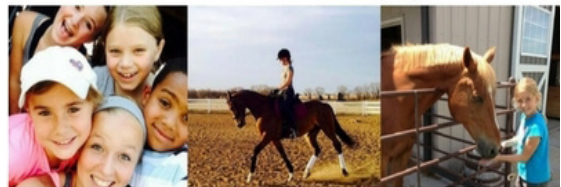
#### Finalized Menu:

- Spinach, mushroom and bacon quiche
- Blueberry cream cheese French toast
- Bacon and Sausage
- Pastries
- Bourbon Brown Sugar Ham
- Orange Juice, Coffee and Tea



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# Nebraska Dressage Association's 2017 Annual Meeting & Year-End Awards Banquet



**when:** Sunday, November 19, 2017

**where:** Ashland Golf Club

16119 Hwy 6  
Ashland, NE 68003  
(402) 944-3344  
www.ashlandgolfclub.com

**10:30 am** Coffee, Cocktails & Conversation\*

**11:00 am** Brunch\* & Silent Auction

**12:00 pm** Annual Meeting & Officer Election  
with Awards Presentation to follow

*\*cash bar*

Yes, I/we plan to attend.

# of Adults \_\_\_\_\_ (x \$17.50) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# of Children \_\_\_\_\_ (x \$8.50) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*10 or under*

**TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

List names of attendees:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am unable to attend. Please assign my proxy (vote) to **another NDA member:**

Print **YOUR** name

Print **PROXY MEMBER** name

Your signature

Date

Registration & payment due no later than **November 10, 2017**.  
Checks may be made payable to **NDA**.

Please submit to: Kathy Hanford  
10301 W. Pioneers Blvd.  
Denton, NE 68339



*Enjoy Missy's account of her European summer riding adventures*

## A Summer Abroad

By Missy Fladland

Thanks to two amazing sponsors, Rocking Bandelaro and CAPHRI Dressage, I was lucky enough to get to spend my summer training and showing abroad under the careful eye of Katherine Bateson Chandler alongside my two FEI horses, Sunny and Gem. On a quick side note, some of you may remember my horse Royal Gem mentioned in several articles in Dressage Today that were dedicated to the great and wonderful man, Lloyd Landkamer. Lloyd, along with his long-time partner Bill Solyntjes bred and raised Gem until he was purchased by my wonderful clients, Bill and Marcia Young. I like to think that Lloyd is enjoying watching just one of many of his talented horses that he and Bill bred enjoying success in this sport. I would like to start with a special thank you to Lloyd and Bill.

Working with the best in the business, Dutta Corporation were able to secure

us a flight out of Chicago O'Hare. Upon arrival we were met by longtime employee of Dutta Corporation, Cathy, who is just amazing. She walked us through the process and answered any questions or concerns we had. It was very clear that the horses were her top priority.

Our flight over was quiet and uneventful, the best we could have had. We were lucky in that it only took about 2 hours for us to get through customs in Amsterdam (average time is about 5 hours). A 12-hour lorry ride to the UK and a ferry boat ride from France to our final destination of Gloucestershire, and we arrived at Anne Cohn's beautiful yard around noon on a Sunday. The horses were in good condition as they had eaten and hydrated well through the entire journey. We were to have a week of time to acclimate while Katherine finished up in Denmark riding for the

US on their Nations Cup Team.

I just can express how much I love working with Katherine as she always let you be a part of your lesson by allowing you to add your input and she carefully listens to any feedback that you give her and then with that input helps you figure things out. She never discounts what you are feeling and even though it might not be the right feeling she helps you wade through all of these things to help make the picture crystal clear, making it black and white for the horse. Through her careful and strategic lessons that offered simple but very effective exercises we were able to gradually increase the intensity of the training increasing the horses' fitness and suppleness.

Katherine is so great about her fitness program, not only for the horses but for herself too. She is so careful not to overdo it with the horses and always



has the horses mental as well as physical welfare at heart.

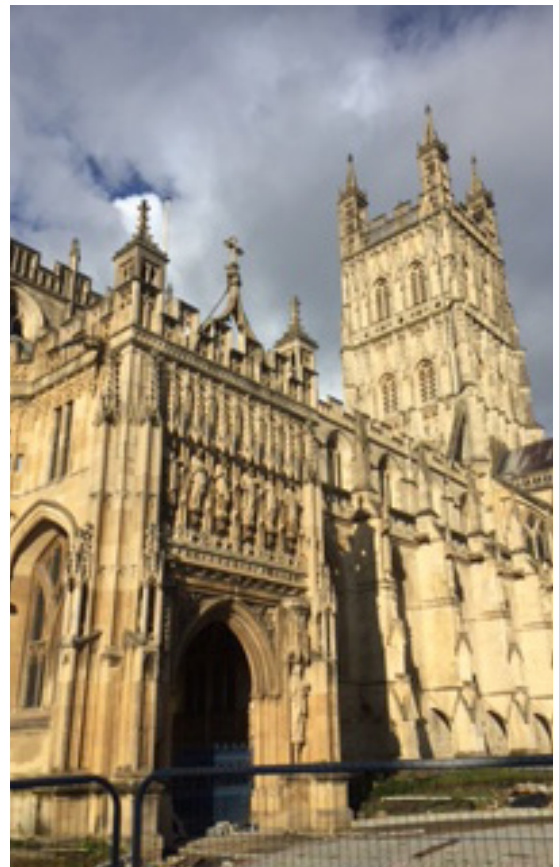
In addition to my training with Katherine, I also had a physiotherapist that Anne recommended to me, and she was truly wonderful. Each week we went through my body targeting areas that were unbalanced and uneven in my structure. Each week I went home with another piece of homework, whether it was an exercise, new stretch, or breathing technique it added to my strength and suppleness, which I know my horses appreciated.

In July, Katherine and I were starting to plan the shows for Gem. We picked out a nice National Venue, followed up by the CDI at Hickstead. We decided to wait with Sunny until September just to ensure he was ready. Sunny had a little inflammation in a check ligament during the last FL season, and all though scans were clean again Katherine wanted to take the time to make sure we built his strength up slowly, and I just loved that!!! He would debut towards the end of our time in the UK.

British Dressage has a very nice system of shows that cumulate into several championship series for several levels of riders. They offer a Bronze, Silver, and Gold rider classification which is available in most all levels and you are placed in said classification at said level based on how your scores are at that level. With this structured setup, it allowed people from all types of abilities to compete in a championship series if they desired too. Although this did not apply to me so much it was so fun to see how another country ran their national association. Another thing that was nice was the number shows available. Not all of them offered what we know as Training level to Grand Prix, but you did have many to choose from that were close in proximity to our location which made things easy as they were all one day shows that you trailered in and out the same day.

Getting to a show, in a foreign country, or at least here, was just a phone call away. At home, like most of us, I trailer my horses myself no matter where I'm going. So, having someone else trailer them was a bit new for me but as you shall read was again another wonderful experience. Ian Newman of Newman Horse Transport, is happy going, older gentleman, with decades of experience in horses. He and his wife Rosie run their transport business 7 days a week, as they also serviced stranded lorries.

The ride over was just great and after my first experience with Ian I knew he would be the one I would be calling to hire when I need to go somewhere with the horses. We had a great warm up for his first time back in the ring and first time jumping out to show. We were in a class of 13 riders. Our ride time was right in the middle so although I would not be able to stay to the end to see how we placed, the show manager said she would let me know how we did and then mail me my test and any money we might win. Yes, you read that



correctly, at the national level you can win money, and we did. Out of the 13 competitors, we ended up winning the class and even got a short interview with Horse & Hound magazine. So, Gem and I were off and running. Now onto Hickstead!

It was a short week later and I was back on the road with Ian and both horses on our trip over to Hickstead. Gem would show and Sunny would be there to school. Although the forecast was grim with rain showers, I was just so excited to be there and showing, I just did not care. We arrived safely and got the horses settled as well as myself. Thank goodness, we were with the Nations Cup team and were in the stalls that were under the tent that had a nice over hang which kept the horses nice and dry. Other than that, it was a bit muddy. Oh well.

It was a great show, and Gem was a super star. My first ride the PSG, there were 45 riders and out of all of those who did I have to follow in my first CDI in Europe? You guessed it, Charlotte Dujardin. So, I went in head held I and owned that ring. We had a couple of bobbles but came out with a 66 and ended up in the top 20. The next day was even better, came back and placed 10th with a 68+ in a class of 32. We made it to the freestyle, and stepped it up again placing 9th overall with a 69+. I could not have been happier for our debut in Europe. I also enjoyed riding with Charlotte Jorst, and Suzie Dutta as they were showing their up and coming small tour horses too. We all did well and finished with scores very close to one other. Sunny also had a great experience at Hickstead and schooled great. It was a nice experience for both horses.

After Hickstead we started pointing Gem towards the Grand Prix and would be spending the remaining time focusing on training. Now it was time to focus on Sunny for showing. Sunny had made some big changes over the summer with his fitness, strength, and suppleness and now it was time to take it out for a spin, so we signed him up for a national show. He was a super star! We had a class of 7 and although we had not been in an indoor since we left the state's, he marched into the ring and did the best he could, and that earned him a first place and a 72.363%. It was a great way to end our stay in the UK.

Katherine was very happy and so was I. We were also notified that both horses had been selected for the US Developing clinic with Debbie McDonald and Charlotte Bredahl the week after we would be returning to the US.



That was wonderful news.

I would say that being abroad was a tremendous help to me and my horses and it was a wonderful experience staying in the UK for the summer. I hope to have the opportunity to do this again and be in a position with my horses to show more CDI's gaining more valuable experience.

This was a huge success because of Katherine and her approach to horses, people and life in general. She is as genuine as they come. It took a lot of work and I have been dreaming of this for years but finally got to do it, so for all of those of you out there working on your dream no matter what that might be don't you dare give up, and you will get there. Thank you for taking the time to read about my experience. ❖



Danna Seevers is the owner of Health Nut Highway, LLC. She is a private Restorative Health Coach and Wellness Educator. She has over 30 years' experience in the health and wellness field and is certified as a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner, Restorative Wellness Practitioner, Restart® Program Instructor and Fortis® Corporate Wellness Workshop Instructor. She specializes in educating and empowering individuals and companies to achieve vibrant health and vitality through holistic diet and lifestyle changes.

## Junior Corner

### Junior Clinic with Catherine Chamberlain

The NDA Juniors had an incredible opportunity this October to learn from clinician Catherine Chamberlain at Still Waters Equestrian Center. Nineteen Junior/Young Riders signed up for the Youth Clinic, and auditing the event was free.

This was a terrific opportunity for our youth riders to learn from a multiple USDF medalist and member of the USEF Young Rider European Tour, alongside her many achievements at the FEI North American Junior and Young Rider Championships in her 5 years of competition there.

The clinic was made possible through The Dressage Foundation and the Dollars for Dreamers fundraiser!



### Stick Horse Equitation Class A Success!

Our Schooling Show Championships had a new highlight event added to the weekend, when the participants of the Stick Horse class took the stage!

Hopefully we will plan to do this event in the future for those that want to participate in this class in the future. Enjoy the photos of the event if you were unfortunate enough to miss the event this year.

### A Night of Young Talent

4-H Horse Awards Night, held Oct. 5, 2017, recognized top achievements at the Lancaster County Super Fair and other accomplishments throughout the past year. The Nebraska Dressage Association sponsors the Champion High Score Rider and Reserve Champion High Score Rider awards.

A rider can qualify for this award by completing a minimum of two dressage tests and one dressage seat equitation class in the Dressage Show. The rider with the highest single dressage test score will be named Champion and the rider with the second-highest single dressage test score will be named Reserve Champion.

Pictured are the winners of the Nebraska Dressage Association High Score Dressage Rider Award for high score riders in the 4-H Dressage Show (Award presented by Margo Hamilton of the Nebraska Dressage Association). This year's winners were



Kristen Loudon (champion) and Allison Riedman (reserve champion).

Awards such as these help promote youth riders to continue to grow in their dressage skills.

**Kate Pulec**

*Extension Asst 4-H*

[kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu)

## In the Western Dressage World...

The WDAA Western Dressage World Show is an extraordinary event each year, chock full of amazing riders proudly showcasing an array of breeds. Riders from all over North America made the trip to the beautiful Lazy E Arena in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Over the course of 4 days, 500+ rides took place atop 38 different breeds in 4 simultaneously running arenas. As if that wasn't enough to make the environment palpable with excitement, an additional 10,000 viewers streamed in to watch online! In its seventh year as an association and as host to its fifth annual World Show, the Western Dressage Association of America has made its mark on the industry and Western Dressage has proven it is here to stay!

Dressage riders from Nebraska have competed in the World Show each year since its inception and have done so proudly time and time again. This year proved to be no different! This year's Team Nebraska riders included Glenn Friendt, Janelle Stelk and Deb Wilke, who were joined by coach Emily Johnson of Mountain Rose Horsemanship and Kathy Lewis who was proudly riding for and representing her barn. This year marked return trips for Glenn and Kathy and was Janelle and Deb's debut Western Dressage World Show. Team Nebraska surely did their state proud this year bringing home many Top 10 and Top 5 placings and even some high points.

Congratulations are specifically in order to:

Janelle Stelk for three third-place finishes at Level 2, as well as bringing home third in Level 2 high point! Her stunning mare Dot was surely a favorite at the show and Janelle showcased her beautifully!

Glenn Friendt on his first world show outing with his new horse, Chica, placed 6th, 8th and 9th in very large Introductory Level classes and 10th in overall high point in his division. An elegant duo they were and an example of a lovely and true partnership!

Kathy Lewis cleaned up with a 1st, 2nd and 5th placing, plus a 9th in overall high point in her Introductory level division. And to top it off her stunning Gypsy Vanner, Enchantment took breed high point. Kathy has been a devoted and determined student of this new sport and it showed!

Deb Wilke placed 11th and 25th on her debut show outing with her 3-year-old mare, Sophie, and gifted her little mare with a terrific and very positive educational experience. They both have a tremendous amount to feel good about.

To say it was a good and very fun show outing for the Nebraska group would be an understatement. We are looking forward to next year already! And we would love to have you join us.

by **Emily Rose**

## A Summer of Scholarships

### Jackie Muir

I participated in Karen Pavicic's clinic in the last month and it was fantastic. I gained new tools and short term goals to work on with my new horse, Galway Shore.

The first day was a struggle with Galway not submitting to the bit and Karen making the effort to walk alongside him and act as side reins. I was trying to get the feel of where he should be in his submission so I could proceed on to the trot and canter. This was very helpful to me for the next day, when Karen suggested using a martingale and we could work from there.

While he still did not want to submit fully to the bit, I had moments where I could feel him coming round in his neck and back. Karen suggested we use the martingale for 1 month, making adjustments weekly on this piece of tack.

I have tried to keep all this in mind since riding in her clinic and incorporate these tools as I ride daily. I cannot say enough about the professionalism and effort Karen made for me and Galway those two days. She was patient and kind as well. I hope to have another opportunity to clinic with Karen and move further in my dressage work.

## A Summer of Scholarships

### Best Tess Ever

by Melissa Ward

My very first “forever” horse, Wintessa, is the primary driving force in my dressage journey. When I bought her as an unbroke almost-3-yr-old, I made a commitment to her to do my very best to set her up for success. That means enriching both our lives with continuing education, and constantly striving to find ways of riding that will make her happier, stronger, and healthier.

Dedication is cheap, but horses are not. Since I do not have the funds to take weekly lessons, most of Tess’s and my education comes from regular clinics with our Colorado-based trainer, Sarah Martin. These clinics are crucial to our development as a harmonious team, and Sarah has helped see me through many challenges with my special mare, who is now 9. (OMG, she’s 9? How did that happen?)

Two years ago, for example, Sarah guided me and Tess through a baffling period of mystery tension and bad behavior. After solving a tricky saddle fit puzzle, we emerged from that period with a renewed partnership and a world of training unfolding at our feet. I don’t know how I would have gotten through that period without Sarah.

I was extremely fortunate and beyond thankful to have been selected as an NDA Educational Scholarship recipient in 2017. The funds from this scholarship went toward two clinics with Sarah this summer, one in mid-June and one in late August.

By the time I saw Sarah in mid-June, Tess and I had a really great winter and spring of training. Our basics were more solid than ever, but I was not quite sure how to adjust Tess’s balance for the step up to Second Level. We had the movements, but not the appropriate collection. Sarah took the first day to evaluate Tess’s progress, watch her go, sit on her, and get a feeling for where we were in our development of the aids. She was really pleased with our progress, and in Day 2 of the clinic, we focused on deliberate steps to adjust the center of the horse’s balance, lift the neck and withers, and ask for more self-carriage. To my delight, our hard work on the basics paid off—Tess was able to accept this new structure with no panic or dissent (which for this opinionated mare, is quite remarkable!). The next two days were amazingly productive, even sprinkling in a couple of flying changes.

When I ride in clinics with Sarah, I usually give her my iPhone and she walks around with it, recording the audio of our lessons so I



can listen to it again later. After the lesson, she saves the recording, gives it a name in my phone, and hands the phone back to me. After Day 3 of our June clinic, Sarah was so pleased with our work, she named the audio recording, “Best Tess Ever.” I cried a little bit, thinking back on our journey together.

The August clinic was just as exciting. Even though my professional life had gotten quite hectic and my rides were a little less frequent than I wished, things were going well. I’d been interspersing some work in the double bridle into our rides, and our balance was definitely improving. During the August clinic, Sarah wanted to see even more activation of the hind legs, key to achieving the Second Level collection we were striving for. The weekend was focused on patterns to increase overall elevation, and the use of *passade turns* (a trot movement akin to turn on the haunches at the walk) to help weight and engage the hind legs. Sarah said she noticed a marked improvement from Day 1 to Day 3 in the activation of Tess’s hind legs.

The amount of progress Tess and I have made since this spring is remarkable. These clinics came at the perfect time to help us take the next step up the training scale, and have given us so much wonderful homework to keep us occupied. With any luck, we’ll be making the rounds at Second Level next show season.

Thank you, NDA, for helping to make this possible with the outstanding Educational Scholarship program!



Anna Cooper

Riding in the Karen Pavicic clinic was an amazing opportunity. I learned so much, and looked at my riding with a new perspective. For example, Ms. Pavicic worked with me and my horse on traveling straight. Gypsy, my nineteen year old thoroughbred, likes to pop a shoulder out and travel in a crooked line. After only a few minutes, Karen noticed this and began working with me to improve this skill using creative ways.



She started by having me follow her on straight lines around the arena. I was challenged to turn with only outside rein and leg. She then used the visual of Gypsy's ears. She explained that when a horse's ears are an equal distance from your hands, they are straight, whether on a long side, diagonal, or circle. She had me work on the quarter lines, doing a lot of transitions from walk to halt to trot to canter to

walk, focusing on keeping Gypsy straight.

Ms. Pavicic explained everything in a way that I could understand. One of my favorite things about her was that when Gypsy was spooking, or bracing, she told me it doesn't matter. She only wanted me to do one thing at a time, and that was staying straight. She also gave me many useful exercises to practice. In one, I trotted or cantered a three loop serpentine, but walked or trotted the middle loop, keeping all the lines straight so that it was more like three boxes. She had me do transitions at exactly the right moment, until Gypsy's was using her hind legs and collecting much easier. It can be a challenge to collect my horse, because her back and neck are very long. Ms. Pavicic showed me that it's possible to do with any horse!

This was my first time riding with an international competitor. I wasn't sure what to expect but Karen was very informative and friendly. I am so grateful for being able to ride in this clinic. Thank you NDA!





## Region 4 News

Our younger generation of Region 4 riders have been getting the royal treatment by the press this fall! Beginning this exposure was the extensive coverage of our own Otilia Jones' incredible performance with her gold medal at the Adequan/FEI North American Junior and Young Rider Championships this July. Following this attention, our own Casey Blum was highlighted alongside her mount, Eschaton, by Chronicle of the Horse in early October for her victory in the adult amateur second level championship at the Great American/USDF Region 4 championship.

The USDF National Dressage Finals will be held November 9 through 12 at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. This will also be the site for the USDF Annual Convention held on November 29 through December 2.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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Advertising images, documentation, and any questions should be sent to Margo Hamilton at [margoreham@gmail.com](mailto:margoreham@gmail.com). Checks should be made payable to NDA and should be sent to Kathy Hanford, 10301 W. Pioneers Blvd, Denton, NE, 6833

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# Calendar of Events

## NOVEMBER

- 9-12** USDF National Finals  
Kentucky Horse Park,  
Lexington, KY
- 13** NDA Board Meeting,  
6:30 Misty's Steakhouse in  
Havelock
- 19** NDA Year-End Banquet and  
Awards Ceremony,  
Ashland Golf Club

## DECEMBER

- NOV 29 - DEC 2**  
USDF Annual Convention,  
Lexington, KY
- 11** NDA Board Meeting,  
6:30 Misty's Steakhouse in  
Havelock



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Photo by Susan J Stickle:  
Olivia LaGoy-Weltz,  
2015 Lavell Advanced  
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<b>NDA Schooling Show Championship Score Report ~ 9/24/2017 ~ Judged by Nena Denman, r</b>						
Time	Class	Division	#	Horse	Rider	Score
8:00	Intro A	Open	155	Dad's Special Gift	Suzanne Border	63.750
8:06	Intro A	Jr/YR	183	Tammens IBN Sadik	Sara Loukota	60.000
8:12	WD Intro 1	AA	160	Buckshots Dun Chic	Glenn Friendt	75.687
8:18	WD Intro 1	Jr/YR	175	Fortunes Fiero	Chloe Stander	60.909
8:24	Intro B	Jr/YR	179	Tohlef	Lexi Wathor	62.188
8:30	Intro B	Jr/YR	156	Charlie Brown	Zoe Christensen	62.188
8:36	Intro B	AA	162	Goldhills Gemini	Kathy Hanford	61.250
8:42	Intro B	Open	155	Dad's Special Gift	Suzanne Border	58.125
8:48	Intro B	Jr/YR	183	Tammens IBN Sadik	Sara Loukota	scratch
8:54	WD Intro 3	AA	186	Banjo	Gloria Ostrander	54.750
9:00	WD Intro 3	AA	160	Buckshots Dun Chic	Glenn Friendt	66.750
9:06	WD Intro 4	Jr/YR	175	Fortunes Fiero	Chloe Stander	56.905
9:12	Intro C	Jr/YR	164	Paint By Number	Bree Miller	66.000
9:18	Intro C	Jr/YR	183	Tammens IBN Sadik	Sara Loukota	54.750
9:24	Intro C	Open	155	Dad's Special Gift	Suzanne Border	59.500
9:30	Intro Champ	Jr/YR	179	Tohlef	Lexi Wathor	61.250
9:36	Intro Champ	Jr/YR	156	Charlie Brown	Zoe Christensen	60.250
9:42	Intro Champ	Jr/YR	173	Mirrihi	Grace Spaulding	60.250
9:48	Intro Champ	Jr/YR	182	Lucy	Lauren Parker	65.000
9:54	Intro Champ	Jr/YR	185	Cookie	Joslyn Schoemaker	55.000
10:00	Intro Champ	AA	170	JDA Marksman	Lori Sass	66.500
10:06	Intro Champ	AA	162	Goldhills Gemini	Kathy Hanford	56.250
10:12	Intro Champ	AA	151	Donielle	Darcy Beck	58.750
10:18	WD Intro Champ	Jr/YR	172	Nina	Emma Smith	66.905
10:24	WD Intro Champ	AA	186	Banjo	Gloria Ostrander	60.476
10:30	WD Intro 4	AA	160	Buckshots Dun Chic	Glenn Friendt	67.143
10:36	Break					
10:50	Training 1	AA	170	JDA Marksman	Lori Sass	64.783
10:57	Training 1	AA	151	Donielle	Darcy Beck	64.348
11:04	Training 1	AA	162	Goldhills Gemini	Kathy Hanford	57.826
11:11	Training 1	Jr/YR	182	Lucy	Lauren Parker	66.087
11:18	Training 1	Jr/YR	181	Anvil's Rethel	Madison Welker	64.565
11:25	Training 1	Jr/YR	185	Cookie	Joslyn Schoemaker	54.783
11:32	Training 2	AA	165	Boomer	Katie Miller	63.269
11:39	Training 2	AA	153	Lyricon	Betsy Bobenhouse	69.038
11:46	Tr. Rider	Jr/YR	183	Tammens IBN Sadik	Sara Loukota	65.900
11:53	Training 2	Jr/YR	177	Coal Creek Devious Boy	Alexa Starnier	68.077
12:00	Training 2	Jr/YR	180	Last Call	Sierra Wilson	65.000
12:07	Lunch					
12:40	Training 3	AA	165	Boomer	Katie Miller	66.364
12:47	First 1	Jr/YR	157	RT Best Western	Jocelyn Cobb	60.741
12:55	First 2	AA	168	RG Skipper Boy	Natalie Nason	55.313
1:03	Second 2	AA	159	Comtess Casablanca	Regina Frey	61.026
1:11	Second 1	AA	184	CP Merritt	Sylvia Rogan	53.636

1:19	Second 1	AA	171	Overthyme AMF	Remy Sass	57.273
1:27	Second 1	Open	169	RG Denmark Royal's Image	Kate Rawlinson	60.455
1:35	Second 3	Jr/YR	166	Lazzaro	Maci Reeves	56.220
1:43	Second Champ	AA	159	Comtess Casablanca	Regina Frey	60.610
1:51	Training Champ	AA	153	Lyricon	Betsy Bobenhouse	64.773
1:58	Training 2	Jr/YR	163	Can Danse	Miya Higgins	61.591
2:05	Training Champ	Jr/YR	181	Anvil's Rethel	Madison Welker	54.545
2:12	Training Champ	Jr/YR	173	Mirrhi	Grace Spaulding	58.409
2:19	Training Champ	Jr/YR	176	Bar Nothing Dianna	Aussia Stander	58.409
2:26	Training Champ	Jr/YR	177	Coal Creek Devious Boy	Alexa Starner	62.273
2:33	Training Champ	Jr/YR	157	RT Best Western	Jocelyn Cobb	62.955
2:40	Training Champ	Jr/YR	174	Kane Creek Oregon Reign	Chloe Stander	63.636
2:47	Training Champ	Jr/YR	180	Last Call	Sierra Wilson	61.364
2:54	Training Champ	Jr/YR	158	RG Flyhawks Destiny	Cally Dorff	57.727
3:01	Break					
3:10	WD Level 2 - 1	AA	178	These Spots are Hot	Janelle Stelk	66.923
3:18	First Champ	AA	171	Overthyme AMF	Remy Sass	64.459
3:26	First Champ	Open	169	RG Denmark Royal's Image	Kate Rawlinson	66.765
3:34	First Champ	Jr/YR	166	Lazzaro	Maci Reeves	63.676
3:42	First Champ	Jr/YR	176	Bar Nothing Dianna	Aussia Stander	56.176
3:50	First Champ	Jr/YR	163	Can Danse	Miya Higgins	56.875
3:58	WD Level 2 -3	AA	178	These Spots are Hot	Janelle Stelk	68.667
4:06	First 3	AA	184	CP Merritt	Sylvia Rogan	67.206
4:14	First 3	AA	168	RG Skipper Boy	Natalie Nason	56.765
4:22	Training 2	Open	167	Little Red Corvette	Katie Krause	56.346
4:30	WD Level 2 Champ	AA	178	These Spots are Hot	Janelle Stelk	66.613
4:38	WD Level 1 - 1	Jr/YR	152	Tes Magic Man	Anne Bennier	73.148
4:46	WD Level 1 - 1	AA	161	LAH Moonie	Diane Fucinaro	65.741
4:54	WD Basic 1	Open	154	Paint By Number	Emma Buda	62.292
5:02	WD Basic 1	Jr/YR	172	Nina	Emma Smith	62.917
5:10	WD Level 1 Champ	Jr/YR	152	Tes Magic Man	Anne Bennier	64.231
5:18	WD Basic Champ	AA	161	LAH Moonie	Diane Fucinaro	66.200

