

NWDA *Accent*

MARCH 2021



From left to right:

Heather Davies, Julie Davies (Pagels) school horse extraordinaire Sandy's Queen, Brenna Jones, Carlin Jones. Circa 1983.

Photo credit: Julie Davies Pagels



President's Message

North Woods Dressage Celebrates 40 years of Riding!

Dear North Woods Dressage Members,

For the past 40 years North Woods Dressage has focused on developing and encouraging an interest in dressage, combined training and all related English style horse activities. Today, NWDA continues to improve communication, to provide educational opportunities, and to grow our horsey village.

Did you Know? NWDA was founded in 1981. Get ready, get set, Go! This year NWDA is going to take a walk down memory lane. We are inviting you to Be Part of the Celebration! Share pictures, share stories, etc. Email us at nwdagmo@gmail.com

Over the past 40 years there have been so many studies, suggestions, updates etc. locally and at the USDF and USEF level. I believe most discussions have been productive and have continued to focus on what's best for all people. I have appreciated learning and growing as a rider and as your President. I believe we need to stay focused as an organization on our mission while continuing to ask questions as we improve and grow.

The North Woods Dressage Association would like to focus on growing our membership. Can we exceed 125 members in 2021? Yes we Can! Please renew your membership today. We have recognized and have worked hard to make sure NWDA membership is affordable for all. The annual banquet highlights our members and is a huge benefit to our members. This year we invite everyone to Be Part of the 40th year Celebration! Please share with others the benefits our members have. We all need to do our part and share as we care.

On February 27, 2021 NWDA celebrated (virtually) the 2020 NWDA Annual Awards Banquet. Congratulations to our riders! Although the banquet was small, it was strong and filled with love and laughter and fun entertainment. Yes, the NWDA show season was cancelled due to Covid, however several members were still able to compete elsewhere. We are so proud of your accomplishments and have featured them in this newsletter.

Finally... 2021 is here, hopefully you are able to start getting ready for the 2021 show season. Whether you are setting goals, moving up levels or learning new techniques everything you do matters. Hopefully April will open doors to outdoor riding. As you are preparing for the 2021 show season and fine tuning your goals, please make sure to include NWDA shows on your list. June 2021 will kick off the show season with a great schooling show followed by our recognized show.

In closing, I want to encourage everyone to think about volunteering. As a non-profit organization from top to bottom we want the shows to go on but without volunteers that is not possible. Can you recruit a volunteer as a "Pay it forward?" Everyone benefits and will be returned directly to you in more activities. We are also looking for a Volunteer Coordinator. If you are interested or know someone who may be interested please let us know.

Thank you for being a part of this great organization. I look forward to seeing you in person soon!

May the Horse be with you and always remember to wear your helmet.

Kathi



Leah Majkrzak
Photo by Red Pony Photography

"TDF support helped make my dressage dream a reality!"

-Olivia LaGoy-Weltz



Show your love for dressage with one latte a month!

By donating the cost of just one latte (or two!) each month, you'll become part of something big.

From beginners to Olympic hopefuls to the senior riders of our sport, your donations will fuel the dreams of dressage riders across the country.

We invite you to "Love TDF a Latte" with a monthly donation. As a special thank you, we'll send you a gift that shows that you love dressage "a latte!"

Learn more & **Give today** at dressagefoundation.org or call us at 402-434-8585.



THE DRESSAGE FOUNDATION 

Hoofbeats Musical Freestyle Clinic

By Amy Roberts

As an event rider stuck in the arena for the winter I was already bored with my dressage work. I know it is important and improves my horse but by mid-December I was already uninspired. I then saw the Hoofbeats Musical Freestyle clinic offered by Erin Boltik and Heather Salden Kurtz and thought, why not! After a few emails and conversations with Erin we decided First Level was doable for my not confirmed at First Level horse.

On the first day of clinic we arrived at Orchard View Farm in time to watch Erin practicing her freestyle, what an inspiring ride! It was nice to hear Heather's coaching style, I was hopeful to go home with newfound purpose to my dressage work.

The clinic was full of mostly First Level horses and they were much further than Margo. Heather was quickly able to assess the good, the bad and ugly of our training to that point. Heather provided ideas and suggestions that would act to calm Margo, show off her walk and canter and hide our trot lengthening. Where other horses did lots of trot work we decided to wow the judge with more canter work and put it towards the end of freestyle. There were lots of laughs when I repeatedly forgot to halt! I was so focused on the test movements, and in my defense we only halt at the end in Eventing.

After videoing my newly choreographed freestyle, Erin took over looking for music to compliment Margo's gaits. This is where having my friend Megan Mattie with helped, having extra eyes and musical suggestions and laughs. This process was great fun and we decided music from Spicy 80's Women. Artists like Madonna, Cher, Pat Benatar, Bonnie Tyler, and music from Flashdance. As we watched the video and suggested music it was surprisingly how quickly we could pick or discard songs for Margo's gaits. On day one we choreographed and picked music wow!!

Day two was a lot of riding and laughing. The other clinic participants watched and made further suggestions. What was amazing to me was how much Margo liked or disliked songs. To some she danced and it felt amazing, others she kicked towards speaker and pinned her ears. After a few small

tantrums someone suggested Nasty Girl, we laughed and on went the music. Quickly Margo started a tantrum to show how nasty she could be, bucking and spinning the music was quickly cut. Luckily I was able to stay on to the relief and amazement of both Heather and Erin.

Before leaving for weekend we reorder our tests for Erin to get a better look for how she will eventually fix the music. Margo and I have been sent home with a lot of homework. Importantly, we will be perfecting our Freestyle test. We will also be working on First Level Test 3 because to ride a Freestyle, I need a qualifying score of 63% in that test first. Once our Freestyle test is smooth we will return to OVF and again film test for Erin. At this point she will finalize the music to make a beautiful artistic impression, we may tweak the choreography a bit too. I am excited to see the results and hope to make our debut at Iron River this summer.

Overall Heather and Erin have made this process smooth and fun and gave me inspiration for our long winters.



We Want You!

We want you to join a NWDA Committee! Do you like to organize events? Are you great at fundraising? Are you a graphic designer or social media star? The Committee list can be found on the website. Please contact the committee chair if you know where you belong!

We are also taking nominations for our hardworking Board of Directors! Contact Jen Hovde if you're interested in joining us! The Board of Directors meets monthly at Blackwoods in Proctor, or virtually via Zoom.



Find us on
Instagram



@nwda4

For information on our programs or events visit us at

northwoodsdressage.net

Scholarships available!



Did you know you could receive a scholarship from NWDA? We award scholarships in the amount of \$150 to members like you for educational events such as clinics, conventions and more. Application form can be found on the NWDA website. In return you'll write an article for the newsletter or volunteer at an NWDA event or show. See the website for complete rules and the application form.



A Challenge is underway!

Most of us are still having to scale back our activities these days. What is one thing you can continue to do?? **LEARN!!!**

As Regional Director, I challenge each and every one of you to earn a USDF University diploma!

It is free and a member benefit!

Every member who earns credits in 2021 will be competing for fabulous prizes!

Can we become the Region with the most University credits earned this year?! Rise to the challenge!

Challenge your friends! Get 100% participation in your barn, your GMO, your family!!! Let's do this!!

Anne Sushko USDF Region 4 Director

Debby Savage USDF Region 2 Director

We had THREE NWDA members in the TOP FIVE credit earners in Region 4 in 2020.

Go Northlanders!

Jessica Foschi

Alexandra LaFleur

Erin Johnson

Get started here:

usdf.org/education/university/

Meet your Board of Directors!

Officers:	2019-2021	2020-2022	2021-2023
President:	Dee Closson	Pam Forsythe	Natascha Artang
Kathi Kusch-Marshall	Kathi Kusch Marshall	Kate Hinz	Alex LaFleur
Vice President: Leah Nelson	Leah Nelson	Jen Hovde	Mary Sumbs
Secretary: Alex LaFleur	Christina Steenekamp	Megan Matson	Brigid Pajunen
Treasurer: Jen Hovde	Julie Williams	Claudia Schoendorf	

Please feel free to reach out to any of us with questions, comments or concerns.

Contact us at nwdagmo@gmail.com



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO NWDA!

NWDA turns 40 years old in 2021

We will be planning some special celebrations in 2021.

We are looking for your help!

Please send us your photos and stories from over the years.

Email them to us at nwdagmo@gmail.com

#nwdathrowback

2020 USDF Convention Report

Jessica Foschi

CSDEA GM Delegate



From December 2nd - 6th, 2020, USDF held its annual convention in its first ever virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Convention week is always a favorite of mine – It's an opportunity to have a voice in the governance of USDF, to learn about new opportunities within the sport, and to find inspiration and motivation heading into the new year as both a competitor and volunteer. Despite the challenges of a virtual format, USDF put together a wonderful convention. It is clear the effort USDF put forth to create meaningful content for its members, and there were no shortage of educational sessions to attend or meetings to participate in. A particular highlight this year was the education sessions. Ranging from a variety of topics, the featured education sessions covered bit fitting, joint maintenance, equine nutrition, training tips and were of outstanding quality overall. The Convention took place via the Zoom platform and was a great benefit to USDF members as it was a free opportunity to participate in this year.

COVID concerns were a common theme throughout the Convention. USDF Executive Director Stephen Hienzsch noted the impact that the pandemic has had on our sport – USDF memberships were down overall by 11% and Group Member memberships were down by 14%. This year 409 competitions were held compared to 810 competitions in 2019, and 46,000 competition rides in 2020 took place compared to 86,000 competitions rides in 2019. In 2021, USDF plans to commit to live events where appropriate and feasible, with priority given to training for licensed officials and competitions.

The L Program Committee noted that the challenges of the pandemic will be taken into consideration as it effects applicants, for example attendees of Part 1 of the program will be given additional time where appropriate to complete Part 2 of the program.

Despite the challenges of 2020, there's been a significant upside. The unavailability of in person gatherings has led to some great advancements in the availability of remote education. This past year, USDF and GMOs across the country have made the shift to more online educational content. The ability to earn USDF university credits was assigned to all educational content in the USDF library. USDF also has an eye geared towards developing more virtual education opportunities for the future. For example, two new educational series have been developed: the Taste of the L Program and a Remote Freestyle Judging Session. Both sessions are three hour programs developed to be presented as distance learning opportunities via a remote platform by your local GMO. The Taste of the L Program gives an overview of the topics covered in Part 1 of the L Program presented by current L Program faculty. The remote freestyle seminars include four 45 minute seminars designed to focus on lower level freestyles and presented by 'S' Dressage Judges with a USEF Freestyle Designation. Both programs will offer continuing education credits for L Graduates.

There are also three new exciting USDF programs are currently in the works. The first is a National GMO Volunteer Recognition Program which will recognize members who have spent time volunteering for their local GMOs. The USDF Group Member Committee felt this program would be a great benefit to both volunteers and GMOs together as it supports and incentivizes the idea of volunteerism on a grassroots level. The current proposal is based on hours spent volunteering and three time-tier levels. This will be a wonderful opportunity for NWDA members, and I encourage you to reach out to NWDA's volunteer coordinator if interested in learning more about volunteering within the club. It's a wonderful opportunity to get involved and give back!

(USDF Convention Report continued)

Secondly, USDF is currently working on a rebuild of their current instructor/trainer certification program as an additional benefit to the program as it already stands. This version of the program is more geared towards a meaningful educational benefit and auditor experience for all members across a GMO, not just those participating in the certification. It is designed to bring education to a wider group within the membership and also to identify prospects that wish to go on to the certification program. Lastly, the third USDF program in development is the Diamond Achievement Award which will recognize members who have earned all of their USDF Rider Medals and their USDF Musical Freestyle Bars. This exciting award will first become available in the Fall of 2021 and will also be retroactive for those members who have already accomplished this major achievement.

Of significant rule changes to note, a revision currently being discussed is the revision of DR 121, in regards to the Dress Rules for competition. USDF is currently soliciting feedback regarding the proposed revision, which would allow for greater flexibility of color for jackets and breeches in competition. Jackets of any non-neon color without bold patterns would be allowed, and the revision would replace the existing HSV color scale. Pinstriping, checks, and contrasting accents and/or piping would additionally be allowed. The revision would also allow for more color for breeches, including dark colored breeches. Any thoughts or comments on the proposed rule change are encouraged by USDF - Feel free to reach out to USDF or your regional PM delegate with additional comments.

Overall, the first USDF Virtual Convention was a great success. This year there were relatively no contested issues for debate during the Board of Governors meeting; rather, USDF presented an optimistic vision for the future, with a goal of adapting the remote educational opportunities developed within the pandemic and a plan to

recommit to live events where safe and feasible in 2021. USDF President Lisa Goretta noted that 2021 will be a monumental year as this will be the first year with youth participation at the US Finals. She additionally encouraged members to support their local GMOs through this hard time, noting we will get through this together and that supporting GMOs now would allow them to continue to offer benefits to their dressage community in the future. And though for many it was a disappointment that the Annual Convention was not held in Region 4 this year, Region 4 will be host to some exciting events in the future. In 2023, both the USDF Convention and the World Cup Final will return to Omaha, NE. With many exciting programs in development and events to look forward to, the Convention came to a close, with the hope that next year we'll all be together again to celebrate this sport we so dearly love. Here's to 2021!

North
Woods
Dressage
Association

2021 Events

June 12-13

NWDA Schooling Show

June 22-23

NWDA JR/YR Clinic

June 26-27

USDF/USEF
Recognized Show

August 7-8

USDF/USEF
Recognized Show

August 21-22

NWDA Schooling Show

nwdagmo@gmail.com

northwoodsdressage.net



Ulf Wadeborn Dressage Clinic

By Deb La Fleur - West Amity Stables

Ulf Wadeborn's home base is in Los Angeles, California at Middle Ranch. He trained under Bo Tibblin at the Swedish National Riding School before migrating to the United States. He has the equivalent of an "S" rated judge back in Sweden and is an "S" judge in the USA.

When riding for Ulf you will be concentrating mostly on the basics and suppleness of the horse. He will notice every detail of your posture, your toes, your elbows, where your sit bones are in the saddle, your chin alignment, etc. He is a guru of being picky about the subtle details of basic horsemanship. The trade-off is the vastly improved feel and timing. Feel and timing are incredibly important in any horsemanship discipline, and especially so in dressage. If the rider is never in correct alignment how is it fair to expect the horse to be in correct alignment? Ulf is fabulous at helping riders create "throughness" of the horse; hind end connection to the front end via the rider's aids. The rider can then influence the horse by the quiet questions he/she asks of the horse. Ulf is incredibly patient and cares that riders learn to feel the horse connecting and coming through the back and onto to rider's aids.

One of Ulf's favorite mantras is "No power tools." If you are working harder, the horse is obviously not. Correct connection, the proper amount of impulsion for the level the horse is at, and above all else the correct alignment (straightness) of the horse is stressed every moment and every stride. The level of concentration can get intense at times, but the result is a horse with more engagement from behind, more suspension in every stride and much greater ease of every movement the rider asks of the horse. I also

love riding for Ulf and watching him teach because he will treat a rider who is on a horse that may not have the most natural conformation for dressage or the most natural gaits for dressage with the same respect and dignity as a rider with a fancier moving horse. He cares mostly that the rider starts to develop harmony with the horse and that the rider wants to learn. All the horses and riders have a much improved way of going by the end of the lesson.

Dressage is good for every horse, jumpers, cutting horses, pleasure horses, reining horses, and even gaited horses. It helps keep them sound, supple, and tuned into the rider's aids. Dressage is not just about fancy moves, or "ballet" on horses. It is more about quality horsemanship and suppleness of the horse. There is a reason that suppleness was added to the dressage training scale!

Thank You NWDA for the scholarship to ride with Ulf. He is one of my all-time favorite clinicians to ride for because of his focus on correct execution of the aids and suppleness of the horse. My horses' soundness and suppleness are the most important thing to me and I appreciate the support.

#nwdathrowback



The photo is of Graymore and Claudia.

The reader is a very young Anne Cizadlo, who is now a USEF 'S' Dressage Judge.

Photo credit: Claudia Schoendorf

Do you have a #nwdathrowback to share?

Tag with the hashtag on social media or email it to us at nwdagmo@gmail.com

North Woods Dressage Association Through the Years

By Claudia Schoendorf

This year, 2021; will mark the 40th Anniversary of our group of die-hard, enthusiastic, and at times frost bitten dressage and hunter/jumper riders; known as North Woods Dressage Association. It is an anniversary that I think we should celebrate. If you have a story of your dressage journey, and would like to share, please send it to us at nwdagmo@gmail.com and we'll include in future newsletters. Below is the story of my journey with NWDA.

I started riding Dressage to try and improve my jumping on my Quarter Horse/ Thoroughbred mare Shannon, we needed to develop more balance, I needed to learn how to adjust her speed as well. We had a problem with combination jumps, we would jump the in jump and she would throw me through the out jump!

I was living in Ashland at the time, and boarded at Jaeger's farm, their son Tom was an aspiring dressage rider. Riding Shannon at the canter felt like riding a giraffe downhill, I had to find a way to make it better! Fred Kappler came regularly to the barn for clinics and we started riding countless 20 meter circles, while Fred encouraged us on.

"There, There. Like that," Fred would say in a mild UP'er accent. All the time I was wondering when all of these circles were going to improve my jumping, then the most astonishing thing happened over time. The more I got into Dressage, the more I got into it. I was hooked!

I also rode with Laura Fraser of Esko, she told me of a new club of dressage riders that had just formed about a year ago, and thought I would enjoy joining. I met the NWDA riders for the first time at their banquet at the Jolly Fisher Restaurant in Duluth. There were about 12 women there, all talking horses, their struggles and triumphs. I felt like I fit right in, it was 1982 and I became a NWDA member and soon afterward a board member for many years. The only reason I remember the year is because it was the same year that I met my husband.

Dressage is an evolutionary process, and NWDA evolved with it. Dressage was new, in so many ways.

USDF itself; was organized not that long before, in 1973. Dressage is good for all horses, we were told, but also found out all horses are not good at Dressage. We rode the horses we had, Quarter Horses, Appaloosas, Arabians, Morgans, off the track Thoroughbreds. NWDA only had one schooling show per year, and everyone looked forward to it, it was held on the third weekend of September, and it was held for many years at the fairgrounds in Proctor MN.

A small dressage arena fits nicely in a hockey ring, but you must trot right in as there is not enough room to trot around it in the ring. Jumping was held in the indoor hockey arena, it was always so cold in there, as the floor was dirt and they just let the ice melt into it. Training Level Test 1 was always the biggest class of the show; many people rode in TR-1 for years as the higher Training Level tests were considered so much harder. Intro Level didn't exist yet, it came later.

Ken Perry a wonderful man, wrote a regular column for the NWDA newsletter entitled The View from E, as that was where he was usually standing, reading countless tests. He once wrote about the shows, "if you were riding a 15 hand chestnut Quarter Horse gelding, you were not alone." It was so true.

One year at the show in Proctor, without us being notified, they used the area adjacent to the dressage ring as a staging area for a parade. There were Shriners dressed as clowns zipping around in tiny cars made from go carts, horses were freaking out everywhere! It was complete havoc!

The clowns didn't seem to care; they had a parade to get to!! Off they drove in their tiny cars. Luckily they didn't come back.

For years our NWDA banquet was held in the Great Hall at the Kitchi Gammi Club in Duluth, as one of our members was also a member there. It was a very elegant place to hold our banquet, sadly we out grew the space over time.

Organizing the show for show management was much more time consuming. Software to organize the ride times didn't exist. Some people did it by hand in a note book, some on a spread sheet. Large poster boards with the names of each rider and horse were hand written in Sharpie pen to list the scores and placings, and attached to the walls around the show office. It took forever to make those boards. Our show was growing and we needed more space for a second ring and better warm up area. The fair board in Proctor said we could develop an area on the far side of the parking lot. We spent several thousand dollars and many rock picking days to build the space for the arenas in the end, there were just too many rocks that would surface every spring and we abandoned the area. The shows were moved to the fairgrounds in Barnum, MN for several years.

In the mid 80s I bought a dapple gray mare out of Quarter Horse racing stock, named

Graymore Creek, she became my partner and soul mate. The day I bought her, I couldn't get her to turn, and she ended up hitting her chest on the fence of the arena, but I rode my first lengthened trot on her that day as well, I just had to have her. We were partners for 20 years.

I have so many wonderful memories of her at NWDA shows. In 1994 Graymore and I won the Jack Pine Circuit Award for First Level & Above. We as a board couldn't imagine riding higher than First Level at the time. There was a class at the Fall show; we wanted it to be something difficult that riders could strive for. It was First Level -3; we included a cash prize to the winner as it was perceived as being so difficult. Julie Barta of McGregor, won it several times. Julie is also the person who designed our original NWDA 3 horse logo. In 1996 Graymore and I won it again, this time it was for First Level and we designated separate awards for Second and Third Level. We were growing; the quality of the rides was also improving.

Sometime about 2000, NWDA moved its show to Iron River, WI and has been there ever since. We always had the arenas set up where they are, but they were on turf, with some natural hillocks, that made the horses stumble, especially at a lengthened trot. Anne Cizadlo and I attended a fair board meeting and asked if they would remove the sod and top soil to reveal the natural sand underneath in the area where

we held our dressage show. We said we didn't want a fence around it, and they could park cars over it for their fair. Sure, came the response, they have been good to work with ever since.

Sometimes our schooling show grew so much that a third arena was needed; the third arena was for all the horses riding Intro Level. The days grew really long with so many horses so a second schooling show was added.

After much discussion, a Recognized show was added so that our members didn't have to always travel to the cities. Now you could really see the quality of the riding had improved and the quality of the horses as well, riders were advancing up the levels. After some time, riders from the cities started to come north to our NWDA recognized show, the park like setting and quality judging were a draw.

It was also around 2000 that NWDA sponsored a L judging program, organized by Anne Cizadlo. Part 1 consisted of Sessions A, 'A Judges Perspective' which was done as an unmounted lecture & video session by the Judge officiate. Session B was about judging criteria for gaits and paces, movements and accurate figures also with lecture and video. Session C is about collective marks, equitation and rider biomechanics and basics. We also practiced judging some tests on live horses and riders. The A, B and C sessions were well attended by NWDA members, as they benefited all dressage riders. I learned so much, and it gave me a better understanding of the scores of a dressage test. Part 2 was for the actual Judge candidates seeking their L certification. The program was a huge undertaking for a GMO of our size, but so worthwhile.

Fast forward to 2017, I didn't show for 8 years, so didn't attend the year end banquets either. When I attended the NWDA banquet after my hiatus I was amazed that our club now gave out awards to Grand Prix, we have come a long way!!

I've been involved with NWDA for a long time, like they say of Dressage, enjoy the journey, because it's what matters the most, it's been the most fulfilling journey.

North Woods Dressage 2020 Year End Awards

ACHEIVEMENT AWARDS

Dressage Suitability in Hand

Pinnacle – Kari Hill and Ijsbarnd Gustaaf Van WGF – Mon cheval Schooling Show 89.500%

Intro Level

Pinnacle – Dale Volk and SS Midnight Rein – Intro C- Dressage Fest II 72.250%

Pinnacle – Piper Hill and Bria OSF – Intro B- Mon cheval Schooling Show 73.125%

Training Level

Pinnacle – Gabriella Kappes and Rueger – TR 3- Otter Creek Dressage Fest 70.517%

First Level

Pinnacle – Gabriella Kappes and Rueger – First 3 – Sorenson Part August 70.000%

Third Level

Gold – Kristin Zuzek and Siegfried - Third 1 – Otter Creek Dressage Fest 64.325%

Fourth Level

Premium – Jessica Foschi and Calypso – Forth1 – Dressage at Alpine 65.000%

Premium – Kathy Faccio and Aidan Forth 1 – Otter Creek Dressage Fest 65.769%

Prix St. George

Silver – Kari Hill and Reindeer PSG – Dressage Fest II 58.529%

Intermediare I

Premium – Julie Davies Pagels and Glimmeratii II – Sorenson Park August 68.971%

Grand Prix

Gold – Erin Boltik and Wranger GP – Otter Creek 61.522%

North Woods Dressage 2020 Year End Awards

MASTERY AWARDS

First Level – Gabriella Kappes and Rueger

Grand Prix Freestyle Erin Boltik and Wranger

Dressage Queen – Piper Hill (highest dressage test score)

School Horse of the Year - Lukje (nominated by Theresa and Svea Fish)

School Horse of the Year – Rhumba (nominated by Christina Steenekamp)

Sportsmanship Award – Abigail Carpenter (nominated by Jenevieve Hofsommer)

Club Recognition Award – Claudia Schoendorf (nominated by Jen Hovde)

Volunteer of the Year - Christina Steenekamp (nominated by Jen Hovde)

USDF BRONZE MEDAL – Kristin Zuzek and Siegfried

USDF GOLD MEDAL – Erin Boltik and Wranger Freestyle Bar

FRIESIAN HORSE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA AWARDS (FHANA)

Julie Williams' horse, Abigail of Friesian Stable with Brittany Davis riding, earned their Dressage Performance Award. Earned in 2020, It is an annual award of accumulated points for type of show entered, ie; USEF, Regionals, with additional points earned for riding higher levels and score received.

They also received their Sport Predicate, awarded by KFPS, the world Friesian registry in Holland, this award is listed on Abby's registration papers. It was earned by riding 3rd Level, and accumulating scores from 5 tests of 60% or more, from 5 different judges.

Sportsmanship Award – Abigail Carpenter

I, Jenevieve Hofsommer, wish to nominate Abigail Carpenter. My reason for the nomination is: Abigail has worked very hard and saved her money carefully to achieve her goal of getting her bronze medal. We all know how expensive and time consuming working toward this goal can be. Abigail planned to ride all her Frist and Second Level tests to qualify for her bronze at the same show last year. She diligently practiced, putting in long hours on her giant 17.2 hh Hanoverian/TB gelding, Nelson. At the show, she consistently got great scores. After the last class on Sunday, we were both high fiving each other, sure she had achieved her goal. Just then the TD came up and asked to look at Nelson. The judge had seen something on the inside of one of Nelson's fetlocks. We found he had somehow nicked his fetlock with his other hoof, probably in the warmup, and the TD put gauze on it and found a spot of blood. So Abigail and Nelson were eliminated right then. Abigail was, of course, disappointed, especially when looking at the test and seeing she would have scored a 65% and would have achieved her goal. However, her primary concern was her horse, and she had a great attitude. She made sure Nelson was ok first and foremost. She found the positive in the situation and remembered just how fortunate she was to be able to have a horse like Nelson and to be able to show and work toward her bronze. Things happen that are outside of our control, but having a great attitude is so important when those things come up. She'll be back again next summer, working hard with a great attitude. Nelson has his very own well-fitting protective boots for warmup, as well! Abigail is an inspiration to those who are achieving their goals on a budget with hard work and lots of fun.

Go Abigail!

School Horse of the Year – Rhumba (nominated by Christina Steenekamp)

I am nominating Rhumba, owned by Andrew Baertsch of Spring Hill Farm in Duluth, for the schoolmaster of the year award. Rhumba (or Bubba as he is also affectionately called) is an amazing horse with a huge heart.

I was first introduced to Rhumba by my trainer, Leah Nelson, when I enrolled in her intensive riding program. I won't lie, I was a bit intimidated, knowing he had already competed to Grand Prix, the panic of messing up this horse crossed my mind. Spoiler alert, we were fine. Getting to know Rhumba was like getting to know a new friend, you peel back the layers until you truly know them. He is all business when you first meet him, and a bit grouchy. Not a huge fan of grooming, you mainly get ears upright only with a treat. But once you gain his respect, he is your best friend.

When I starting riding Rhumba, I had only trained up through Training Level. The thought of riding anything higher was so exciting, but he made sure I didn't get TOO excited. Rhumba can do everything but if you didn't give him the PRICISE cue, or if he didn't think you meant it, you were going to be working for a LONG time. (And I am speaking from experience, ahem, the canter.) But once you got it, you could sense that he was just as excited as you were. Rhumba taught me so much. Patience, perseverance, and a little piaffe J

Rhumba was Leah Nelson's partner in earning her Gold Medal, and helped Brigid Pajunen and I earn our bronze medals. He also helped many riders get the feel for upper level movements that they could take home to their horses. But besides medals and helping with upper level riding, he was an amazing teacher to those not showing and who just loved learning to ride. Rhumba has definitely made his way into many hearts along his schoolmaster journey. I for one will never forget our partnership and am forever grateful for the tools he helped me develop in my riding that I am able to use with my current and future partners. He truly is a 1 in a million horse and deserves every award and sugar cube that comes his way.

School Horse of the Year – Lukje (nominated by Theresa and Svea Fish)

My daughter and I wish to nominate Lukje from Davis Dressage and Performance Horses, LLC.

Our reasons for the nomination are beyond what I can express in this letter however I believe I can give you a glimpse into what this horse has meant to us. My daughter is one of many children and adults who have grown with this gentle giant over the years.

As you all know, horses teach us a great deal about life. They teach us in ways that are simply not available in other learning environments. We learn from their warmth, their texture, their movement, and their trust. We learn how to care for another living being. We learn how to be responsible, respectful, and humble. We learn how to work hard, how to fail, how to fall, and how to persevere. We learn how to believe in ourselves. Horses teach us how to love and how to let go of those we love.

In December of 2020, the year of uncertainty and confusion, Lukje passed away. He was diagnosed with cancer after having difficulties with swallowing for a number of months. Like many little girls over the years, my daughter loved that horse with all of her heart. He was gentle, steadfast, and had a good sense of humor. In his final days he taught her more about life and love and loss, than I could have ever imagined. She was blessed with the opportunity to groom him and walk him in his final days. She was able to navigate all her feelings of love and loss. Feelings that will present themselves inevitably in her years to come.

We nominate Lukje for the NWDA School Horse of the Year Award and cannot imagine a better way to honor his years of teaching and his unwavering spirit. He is and will be greatly missed.

Club Recognition Award – Claudia Schoendorf

I nominate Claudia Schoendorf for the Club Recognition Award because of her outstanding commitment to NWDA. Claudia has been involved with NWDA since its inception. She had a hand in shaping NWDA from the very beginning and has returned to serve on the board. She has been a long time member and continues to support NWDA. I appreciate her experience and loyalty. Claudia has been active in fundraising ideas, bringing in ideas for clothing designs and for our tack swap. She was instrumental in raising money through gathering all the omnibus ads. She even helped several of the businesses design their advertisements. NWDA is lucky to have Claudia as a board member, wholeheartedly jumping in to continue making NWDA great for its membership.

Volunteer of the Year Award – Christina Steenekamp

I nominate Christina Steenekamp for the volunteer of the year award. As an NWDA board member, she serves our organization as a volunteer. Christina is a person who is quietly behind the scenes putting in hours of service to help make NWDA better for its membership. She finds great deals for clothing items, organizes and promotes scholarships, helps on the show committee, and is learning to become a show secretary. I appreciate Christina's positive attitude while always being willing to help.



Lukje 11/5/2001 – 12/9/2020 Owned and Loved by Brittany Davis

Lukje was laid to rest on Dec 9, 2020 due to Megaesophagus, a condition that caused repeated choking. They shared a partnership of 16 years. Brittany rode him through Prix St Georges and he later became a wonderful school master.

Mirabelle Whitman is one of the young girls who learned to ride aboard Lukje.

It's her mother, Rebecca Whitman who wrote the beautiful and heartfelt poem, Always Here.

Always Here

Poem by Rebecca Whitman

When I need you, you are still there,

You are the soft wind that blows my hair.

When I walk, you walk beside me,

You are the light that plays on every tree.

With every bird, I watch you soar,

No other horse have I loved more.

When I falter, you urge me on,

You are the soft peace at break of dawn.

I feel your breath, I see your eye,

In every cloud that paints the sky.

When I am happy, your love pours through,

It's now a part of all I do.

I carry on your joy, just as you carried me so long,

You have taught me to be both supple and strong

I hear the cadence of your hoof beats in

the rhythm of the storm,

Feel your touch within the summer rain, nourishing and warm.

Our adventures carry on in each story of you I share,

You are loved by everyone, your mark is everywhere.

And in the quiet moments, when I miss you with an ache that never ends,

Your tender spirit greets me in the faces of our friends.

Your soul blesses me in each setting sun -

No longer two, we ride as one.

Ever in my heart, I can tell that you are near,

For no matter what may happen, you are always here.

