

NWDA

August 2021

Accent



Dressage Royalty

by Claudia Schoendorf



LEFT Queen Bella Bailadora (handmaiden Mary Sumbs)
RIGHT King Aiden (handmaiden Kathy Faccio)

NWDA held its first **Equine King & Queen Contest** fundraiser during our June Recognized Show. Thirteen horses entered, seven Kings and six Queens. Each nominee paid a \$10 entry fee, submitted a photo, and answered 3 of 6 possible questions: *Who is harder to control—you or your horse? If your horse were a person, describe what type of person he/she would be? What is something you do that mystifies your horse?*

The equine contestants' photos were posted along with the answers. It was really fun to read the answers, some written from the horse's point of view, and some from the person's point of view.

Dale Lewis did a great job encouraging people to vote in between her show announcing duties. 507 votes were cast at \$1 per vote, earning NWDA \$646.00 in votes and entry fees. The horses with the most votes were crowned.

The royalty were presented at the Competitors' Party Saturday afternoon, wearing their crowns and neck sashes and with their handmaidens wearing t-shirts stating *King's Handmaiden* or *Queen's Handmaiden*. They were presented with \$40 gift certificates for future show entry fees. The horses looked beautiful wearing their crowns!

The money raised will be used to purchase great prizes for future competitions. Everyone was very glad to be back in the show ring and with friends they hadn't seen in so long.

Who will be our NWDA Dressage Royalty in 2022?

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Celebrating 40 Years of North Woods Dressage!

National Dressage Pony Cup & Small Horse Championship

By Julie Williams

It's hard to know where to begin the story of my adventure to this year's National Pony Cup Small Horse Championships at the National Equestrian Center in St Louis. I was not sure my aging mind and body were up to



the demands of going and showing Abby myself at such a big event but I convinced myself to submit my entry at the last minute. 5 days before we were leaving I fell outside and messed up my left knee. Great! I'm already dealing with a worn out right knee. I probably should have stayed home but we equestrians are a determined group and I wasn't about to give it up. So I packed up my knee and ankle braces and pain medications and away we went!

I rode two tests and finished 3rd overall for AA First Level. Wow! I still can't believe how good my rides felt. My worst cases of nerves were (1) getting my boot zipped with my swollen left knee and (2) getting off the



ABOVE/LEFT Julie Williams and Abby.

mounting block into my saddle. After that Abby took good care of me.

I can't thank my super woman trainer Brittany Davis for all she did getting me through our days there. It didn't get to the point where she had to carry me around or push me into the saddle but I know she would have! A shout out to Julie Pagels, Gabi Kappes, Kate Phillips and her group and Maddy Kulak for the encouragement and help. Thanks to Jenny Barthen for the photos. It truly takes a village!

I can't say enough good things about riding at this huge show. I recommend everyone with a pony or small horse think about attending. Yes, it's a long way to travel and a considerable expense but this show is so well run and welcoming. You feel you're part of something very special. I hope I'm able to attend this show again in the future. You might see me using a cane, walker or wheelchair but I plan to be there!



The President's Message

BUSY with show season — *no time to write!*

Many, many thanks to all who participate in our NWDA shows as competitors and volunteers. We do it for each other and for our love of horses!

Kathi Kusch Marshall
NWDA President

Getting the Most Out of Your Membership: Exploring the USDF Online Education Library

By Leah Nelson

As riders we seek out knowledge from lots of sources to enhance our riding and help us trouble shoot our training. We seek out clinics and lessons, value our feedback from the judges at shows and we pore over the latest magazine articles. We might watch dressage clinics online or subscribe to one of the various rider training programs out there on the internet. We might have favorite people we follow on social media and of course we read good, old-fashioned books.

One excellent resource that should not be underestimated is the USDF Online Education Library. USDF has done a wonderful job organizing material on a range of subjects. It's highly accessible, easy to navigate and they are adding to it all the time. I think it is one of the very best reasons to become a USDF member, even if you are not competing!

As an NWDA member, you get a USDF GM, or 'Group Membership' which entitles you to several different member benefits, including access to the USDF Online Education Library. What a great deal!

If you have not yet explored this resource, I highly encourage you to spend some time browsing the site! If you have a specific topic of interest, you can search by keyword through the entire library and find many helpful articles, videos and presentations on the topic. Have a question about riding tricky flying changes, or how to support your horse's nutrition, or how to prepare for your first horse show? Search the USDF Library and you're sure to find many useful resources!

My favorite way to use the USDF Library though, is to go through the 'online courses'. These are courses with material organized around a specific area of study. Some of them have quizzes at the end to test your knowledge.

If you're looking for a place to start, the 'Classical Training' online course is wonderful and is a great place to start for any rider!

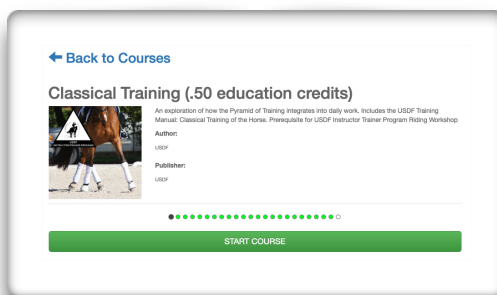
One thing you'll notice is that most courses and videos have 'education credits' listed next to

them. When you complete that material (including the quiz if there is one), you'll receive education credits towards your USDF University Diplomas! As you complete online credits, they will be tracked and you can see your progress by doing a 'transcript search'. If you've attended other USDF sanctioned

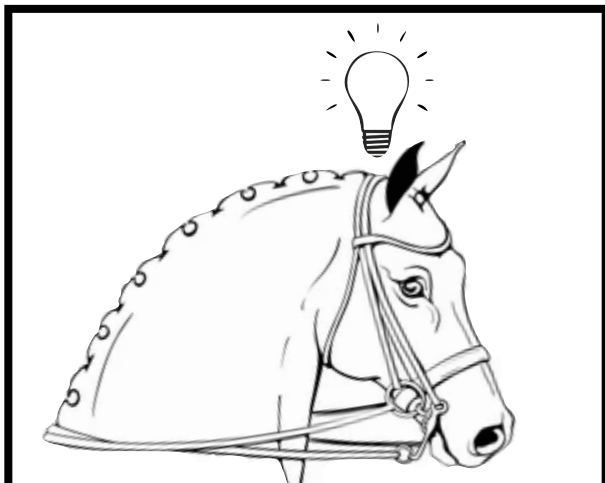
educational events, they will also show up here. Your educational milestones will be listed on your USDF Member Dashboard as well. When you reach those milestones, you can download and print off a lovely certificate to mark your achievement!

You can also watch replays of many USDF Convention Presentations, full FEI-Level Trainers Conferences, or the USDF Virtual Education series (new for 2021), among other events. The depth of content

here is impressive! Check it out, you're sure to learn a lot. Happy riding!



www.usdf.org/education/university/



EQUINE EPIPHANIES

Finn and I have just celebrated our four year anniversary. For four years, I have heard from some of my friends that one day, it just clicks. After weeks, months, and years passed, I realized that I just had to wait and be patient.

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to ride in a demonstration clinic at the MN Horse Expo. The clinician, Dev Branham was amazing! Without knowing us, she hit each participant's problem right on point. For us, it was our bond, and the trust required to have a bond.

Finn and I had an *aha!* moment by the second day. Dev's teaching was that of *think, ask, feel, and help*. All it took was three days. Now Finn listens to my body more and hears what I am thinking and then does it. We've been partners for a long time, but until Dev said to *think* about it before you *act* on it—think *walk*, or think *trot* and give it a destination—we hadn't listened to each other. If only I had known it was that simple. Instead of demanding it and expecting what I was asking, I *thought* about it. Then Finn thought about it. And then we did it *together*.

Since that clinic, our ground work, our bond, and our communication has grown stronger. The *aha!* moment was so small most wouldn't notice it, but for Finn and me it was like a giant neon sign. Instead of being horse and rider, we are partners, a team, and best friends.

—Taelor Malmstrom

This epiphany was 6 or 7 years ago at a local Ida Norris clinic. I had been riding for a couple of years and always struggled with finding my posting trot rhythm. Ida and I began working on that and she told me to *SING*—certainly something I had never thought about. So she and I sang and sang some more! The best song was “Do-Re-Mi” from *The Sound of Music*. I'll always remember that time with her and I still find myself singing “Do-Re-Mi” when I'm riding.

—Julie Williams

My beautiful mare, Sammie, and I were riding for Kate Phillips last winter. I struggle keeping Sam round and on the bit. Kate told me to move my arms forward a bit, to open up the angle of my elbows to 120 degrees instead of 90. I had to shorten my reins to do this, and take an elastic feel of her mouth. Then I could feel the weight of her head in my triceps, like I had bungee cord arms that followed the movement. The weight in the reins allowed the weight of my body to influence her instead of pulling on the reins in the half halt. Kate said I would want to feel this weight all the time.

I felt like my arms were pushed out straight in front of me. But in the video I could see that they were in front of the saddle pad, open angles at the elbows. The trot really improved, and it was very easy to sit, and we felt connected.

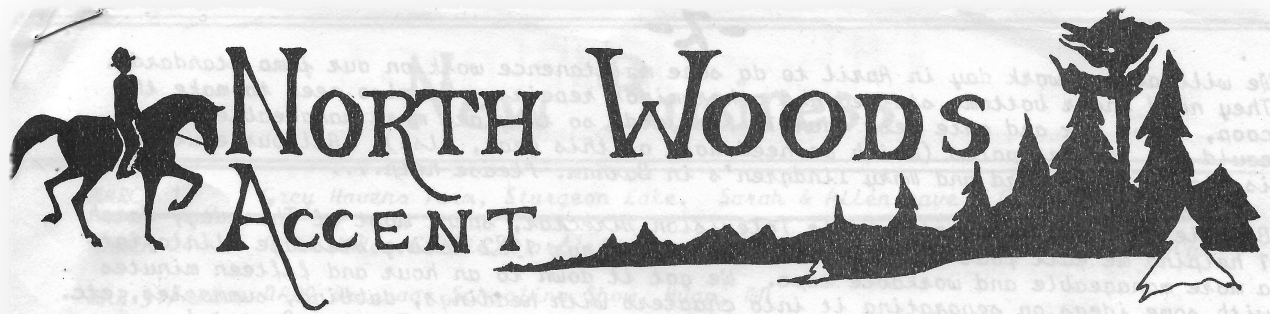
Kate pointed out to me while I was auditing another ride that with short following reins the bit moved just slightly left to right in unison with the gait, being small half halts with the weight in the rider's arms.

So ... pushing your arms forward will fix roundness issues? Not by itself, I learned. Half halts are essential. I needed to have both the connection I created, and the balance and impulsion by using both the short elastic reins and half halts.

Equine Epiphanies, continued on page 6



Have a magical moment to share? Send it to:
nwdagmo@gmail.com



Do YOU believe everything that is spoken in an "accent"--e.g., pillow talk in a French accent, ski instruction with a Scandinavian twang, a Finnish lumberjack, German or Ukrainian cavalry officers that teach riding without a bit of understandable English--? If you do, then this is the newsletter for you. It's written with a NORTHWOODS ACCENT.

Why the Accent?

by Brigid Pajunen

I joined the board of NWDA just as it celebrates its 40th Anniversary. When I volunteered for the newsletter committee I was entrusted with an overstuffed cardboard box—the NWDA archives. Rifling through this yellowed collection I've learned how our newsletter came to be known as the *Accent*.

The masthead above is from a 1984 issue. The byline reminds us of the history of our region, a so-called melting pot. Immigrants came with nothing but often painful stories and a willingness to work. While told in their own languages, these stories had a common theme—looking for a better life.

It is no small thing that in 1981 our NWDA founders had the resources to pursue an endeavor as esoteric and expensive as dressage. A generation or two prior, the horses in this area were gainfully employed in logging, transportation or fieldwork. It's doubtful they would have been inclined toward piaffe and passage—or *riding english*—in their spare time!

Leafing through these musty archives makes me feel nostalgic. My father is 87 years old now

and spent much of his spare time farming hay and oats for his daughters' recreational horses. He thought he'd been relieved of all of that with the invention of the combustion engine and the death of the horse he grew up begrudgingly caring for that had taken him to school and plowed the road. My great aunt Saima, who is 99, now Facebook messages me, asking me what it is about horses that 'girls' love so much.

I can never adequately answer her, but I feel enormous gratitude for horses, for the work of my ancestors, the lush natural resources that make our lives here with horses possible, and the fellow hippophiles who, 40 years ago, organized NWDA and acknowledged our remarkable local history by naming their publication the *Accent*.

BELOW An add for an NWDA sponsored educational activity circa 1984.



Get Psyched to . . .
RIDE ENGLISH
Video Clinic

Sat., March 24 - 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Cloquet's Garfield Community Center Cafeteria

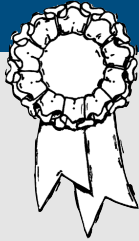
Continuous showings of several videos on dressage and 3-day eventing. Bulletin board available for English tack/clothes. Also bring used English tack/clothes to display for sale. **\$1.00 admission.**

NWDA EVENT DATES

NWDA Classic Schooling Show August 21-22, 2021 Dressage & Hunter/Jumper

NWDA Annual Awards Banquet – THE 80's! February 12, 2022 Blackwoods Proctor

June 26, 2021 Iron River
NWDA Recognized Show Results



CHAMPION AA

Josh Solsvig & Lacksette

Intermediate 1 68.824%

CHAMPION Jr/YR

Kate Benson & MRM Caesar

1st Level 67.7%

CHAMPION OPEN

Bridget Bersey & Crestone Clover

1st Level 72.241%

CHAMPION FREESTYLE

June Mendoza & Bjorne

1st Level Freestyle 73.367%

RESERVE CHAMPION AA

July Hugen & Quantum MRF

Prix St. George 68.676%

RESERVE CHAMPION Jr/YR

Amelia Taver &

Taver's Georgia Dream

2nd Level 66.881%

RESERVE CHAMPION OPEN

Heather Salden-Kurtz &

Halcyonia Eli's Song

Training Level 70.862%

RESERVE CHAMPION FREESTYLE

Gabriella Kappes & Ruger

1st Level Freestyle 70.067%

NOTE: The Introductory Division had no entries.

Equine Epiphanies, from page 4

The weight in my reins gave me a clue as to the connection and the engagement of Sammie, but it varied. There was very little weight in the reins at the walk. At the trot, there was more—and the more impulsion I asked for, the more weight there was!

Kate said, Sammie will feel like she is drawing on you with good impulsion and that I should feel for this. I had to bump the tempo up three times to find it. Then it didn't feel like she was dragging me around, it felt like she was drawing on me and we were connected—like a breeze filling a sail while you are holding onto the sail's rope.

With Sam her best trot has good impulsion, it's what I call the big fancy trot! If I go with the trot that I feel comfortable with, her natural tendency is to go too slow, and get heavy on the forehand. I have learned that the big fancy trot is a lot more fun!

—Claudia Schoendorf

BARN HELP NEEDED

Job opening for an experienced Horse Handler in Duluth Township. Four active dressage horses need daily care.

**feeding . grooming . turn-out . lunging
medicine administration . barn cleaning
stall mucking . hay stacking**

Ability to work independently is a must.
Desire for cleanliness is very important.

CURRENT OPENING
Fridays & Saturdays

Wage dependent upon experience.

CONTACT

Dale at dslewisht@gmail.com

Thank you for your inquiry.

Find out more about us at
northwoodsdressage.net

Junior/Young Rider Clinic 2021 with Clinician Kjirsten Sneed

by Megan Matson

Kjirsten is a graduate “B” pony clubber and a USDF Bronze and Silver Medalist with nearly 20 years of experience in the horse industry. She has worked with young horses and horses coming into work later in life, as well as horses coming back from injuries. Her hoses have included off-track Thoroughbreds, Morgans, Warmbloods, Quarter Horses, Quarter Horse Appendixes, and Arabians. She started teaching Pony Club and went to teach lessons as part of running the horse program at Camp Manito-Wish YMCA. She enjoys teaching horses and riders of all levels, from beginners just starting to upper-level riders. Kjirsten believes that correct dressage basics improve the connection between horse and rider in any discipline. She currently owns a delightful OTTB gelding named Gobain, with whom she competed through Fourth Level Dressage and Training Level Eventing.

At the end of June, Kjirsten was kind enough to come up to teach 7 of our Junior Riders and Young Riders (as well as two young at heart riders) some techniques in both Dressage and Jumping. Her primary focus (at least from this young at heart rider’s clinic round) was focused on how to connect with our horse when asking them to do something for us without constantly applying the aids we used. Watching several groups her biggest lesson when it came to using your aids—whether it was legs or reins—was *ask and get out of the way*. If you keep the pressure applied after the horse has done what we asked they may just learn to ignore that aid in the future.

Another thing I learned not only from riding with Kjirsten but watching the others ride as well is that the half halt does not have to only be with our hands. Any part of us can half halt, our legs, our seats, our core and even our shoulders. Depending on how we apply



ABOVE Clinician Kjirsten Sneed and a very young rider.

these half halts we can get a different response from our horse as well.

I am already looking forward to next year’s clinic and highly recommend it to all our Junior Riders, Young Riders, and even us young at heart riders. No matter what discipline you show or at what level you compete there is always more to learn and the NWDA clinic is a great opportunity. *And* it is a fun time all around!

USDF Jr/YR Clinic

with George Williams

November 6-7, 2021
Whiteland Farm
Delano, MN

Registration closes October 6, 2021

Contact the coordinator:
jyrcclinics@usdf.org



NWDA
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Duluth, MN 55804