

Many thanks to the Connecticut Dressage Association and Fox Ledge Farm for hosting the USDF Instructor/Trainer Development Program Lungeing Seminar. This is the first seminar in the series of 3 that are being run by CDA with the support of The Dressage Foundation. The other two: the Riding Seminar will be July 14-15 at Weatogue Stables, and the Teaching Seminar will be August 10-11 at SperryView Stables. For further information, contact Christine Engel, [christineengel923@gmail.com](mailto:christineengel923@gmail.com).

This first seminar's atmosphere fostered a positive learning environment for all attendees throughout both days.

The seminar focused on consistency and clarity of communication as the keys to confidence building for horses and riders. The safety and welfare of the participants, horses, and riders remained paramount.

On Day 1, USDF Instructor/Trainer and Faculty members Ann Guptill and Vicki Hammers-O'Neil presented, demonstrated, and discussed the classical theory and fundamentals of lungeing the horse and lungeing the rider on the horse. The auditors were very comfortable sharing experiences and asking questions during every session which laid the groundwork for Day 2.

The atmosphere on Day 2 continued with consistent and easygoing communication among the organizers, seminar leaders, participants, horses, and riders from the very beginning.

Each participant had two hands-on sessions. One with Ann and another with Vicki. The morning session was spent lungeing the horse while the afternoon session added lungeing a rider on the same horse used in the morning. These structured sessions included an assessment, the sharing of knowledge, and guidance on how to implement familiar and unfamiliar skills. As the day progressed the confidence of the participants increased.

Throughout the day the definitions of the classical dressage terms and concepts (i.e. Rhythm, Suppleness, Contact, Connection, Vertical and Lateral Alignment) became more identifiable and user-friendly for the participants.

It's always a challenge for instructors/trainers to make sure their students and horses finish a session with an enthusiasm to practice. The Day 2 sessions met this challenge. Each participant developed an appreciation for

what their strengths are as well as an understanding of what to practice at home.

There seemed to be some recurring themes in the practicing category:

**Practicing** lungeing skills will develop habits that influence a horse's training and allow for the development of a lungeing program that enhances a horse's training.

**Practice** and get proficient with the different types of lungeing equipment and determine the best correct fit for each horse and or horse/rider combination.

**Practice** the correct body position, the handling of the lunge line and whip for lungeing.

**Practice** the use of consistent intonations when using voice commands while lungeing.

**Practice** a variety of teaching methods, Students learn in many ways. For example, some people learn by "doing" while some learn by "seeing".

**Practice** being comfortable with repetition while staying creative in teaching.

**Practice** and develop a proficiency for choosing rider exercises that benefit and improve a rider's position and foster the independence of the hand, seat and leg.

Accessible educational events nurture those from the grass roots to the professional level.

The seminar brought together people of all levels and abilities.

It was exciting to see the attendees looking forward to keeping in touch with each other while continuing to network opportunities to continue their education.

Jayne Marino, Certified Instructor through 4<sup>th</sup> Level; 2<sup>nd</sup> day scribe