

Jan/Feb 2025



CENTERLINE



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Connecticut Dressage Association

President's Message

Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a joyous and peaceful holiday season with family and friends (including both the two- and four-legged varieties). The start of a new year is always a great time to reflect on the past and set positive, achievable goals for the future—both in and out of the ring.

I'm excited to hit the ground running as your new CDA president and feel truly grateful to have Hanna's support as I transition into this role. A heartfelt thank you to her for all her hard work and dedication as president these past three years. Looking back, we've had an eventful year, bringing you a ride critique session with Bobbi Carleton, a biomechanics clinic with Virginia Leary, a riding clinic with Lisa Schmidt, and the CDA USDF instructor-trainer seminars.

I'd like to extend congratulations to all of our year-end award winners! We are planning our annual awards banquet for **Sunday, January 26, 2025**, from **3-6 pm** at **Lakeview Lodge in Bethany Veterans Memorial Park (265 Beacon Rd, Rt 42)**. Please RSVP to Fern Feldman at fernfeldman@gmail.com with your name and number of attendees so we can plan accordingly. To help offset costs, there will be a \$20 per person fee, and the event will be **BYOB**. There will be raffles, food, awards, and lots of fun! I look forward to celebrating with you all.

The **2025 CDA Omnibus** is in production! If you'd like to sponsor, place an ad, or submit a prize list, please contact **Carol DiCarlo** at carol@cheshireequestriancenter.com or **Megan Clarke** at megan.clarkeCDA@gmail.com. We'd also love to feature our members, so please send in your pictures!

Looking ahead, we have a fantastic line-up of events for the coming year, including a number of schooling shows (and a few virtual ones), our popular ride critique with Bobbi Carleton, a dressage simulator clinic with Kendra Clarke, a groundwork clinic with our board member Patricia Norcia, and another riding clinic. Stay tuned for more details!

I am so looking forward to meeting all of you and am truly honored to serve this wonderful organization. Thank you to our members, host farms, and the CDA board for your continued support of our equine community.

Here's to a wonderful 2025!

Cheers,

Val Blasi
Blasivalerie@yahoo.com

*"When you have clarity of intention,
the universe conspires with you to
make it happen."
Fabienne Frederickson*

2024 Year End Awards Banquet

January 26, 2025

3:00 – 6:00 pm

Lakeview Lodge, Bethany Veterans Memorial
Park

265 Beacon Rd, Bethany, CT 06524

RSVP by January 22nd to Fern Feldman
fernfeldman@gmail.com

Please note: name and # of attendees

20.00 USD per person

BYOB

Raffles, Food, Awards, Fun and More!



UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION CONFERENCE, HOUSTON, TX

Submitted by Christine Engel, CDA
Treasurer

On December 4 I flew to Houston, TX, to attend the USDF Conference. This was the second time I had represented CDA and Connecticut Dressage and Combined Training Association (CDCTA) at the conference. My expectations were high. I was not disappointed.

The four-day conference was in a beautiful Marriott Hotel but the comfortable accommodations took second place to the friendly people whom I met, the impressive speakers at the forums, the educational

sessions, and the professionals who generously shared their research and advice.

As you might remember, the GMOs are encouraged to donate gift “baskets” filled with items specific or special to your state. On behalf of CDA I brought one, a tote bag really, and filled it with many Connecticut made and horsey things. More about the gift baskets later.

On the first morning, December 5, David O’Connor, the USEF Chief of Sport, talked about “social license,” a term that should be important to all of us involved with horses and competition. Spectators and observers who might have their own ideas of animal welfare must give us the social license a/k/a permission to continue to pursue our sport. We need to put the welfare of our horses first and we need to make that well known.

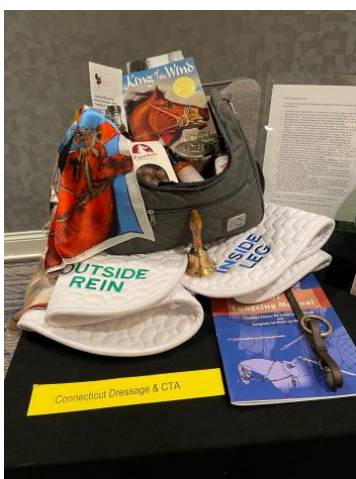
USDF offered several education sessions on the following topics, Equine Degenerative Joint Disease and Polysulfated Glycosaminoglycan is a fancy name for a discussion of Adequan, very interesting and a product that has been heavily researched; Rider Biomechanics was an informative presentation about how our biomechanics affect our Seat and Position score on our tests, for better or for worse.

The presentation on Virtual Lessons was quite an eye-opener for me. Apparently, there is sophisticated equipment easily available that allow a rider to take lessons with a trainer from half-way around the world. While that kind of distance between teacher and pupil might be rare, apparently virtual lessons are not rare at all and their popularity is growing. Another education session was about Flying Changes, a subject that is dear to my heart since I cannot do them well. In fact, hardly at all, but I am hoping. The Future of the Sport, presented by Eliza Sydnor, discussed horse boarding, training, sales, lessons, and coaching your clients at competitions. Based on responses to her survey of horse professionals, Ms. Sydnor revealed which activities provide the most satisfaction and which are most profitable. Here’s a hint; it is not boarding.

Regional Meetings were an opportunity to meet with representatives from other GMOs. It was a perfect chance to share your own GMO’s plans, programs, and activities and get ideas for your new year. The Board of Governors (BOG) meetings on Friday and Saturday included elections of officers. Our new USDF president, Kevin Reinig, was elected unopposed and our Region 8 Director, Helen Van der

Voort, was reelected. There were awards to various GMOs for photography, newsletters, website and special articles. Outstanding volunteers from each region were also recognized. Kari Cincotta was the outstanding volunteer for Region 8.

A fun highlight of the BOG sessions was the president pulling names from a box and awarding the gift baskets to individual delegates. Each person only gets one ticket and the baskets are distributed alphabetically. Wisconsin was awarded last and to my surprise, because I never win these things, my name was called! Thank the horse goddess the box and its contents were able to fit in my duffle bag and were not fragile. Thank you, Wisconsin, for great choices.”



Also, certificates of appreciation were awarded to the best basket in each membership category. CDA is in the 75–200-member group and our basket was judged to be the best for our GMO size. It was a satisfying end to a great dressage experience. Here is a photo of the award-winning basket. I had included some bubble wrap in the basket so I really think everything

would fit (ok, maybe not the pad) if packed carefully. The conference was wonderful. I enjoyed being with so many other horse lovers and would attend again but I should not be greedy. It is time for some other CDA member to have the experience.



Christine Engel, Treasurer, CDA.

2025 CDA Sponsored Clinics

- Dressage Simulator with Kendra Clarke in NJ. March 8, 2025 (weather permitting, will reschedule if needed)
- Ride-Critique-Ride with Bobbi Carleton at Sperry View April 12-13, 2025.
- Groundwork Clinic with Patricia Norcia at Idlenot Farm August 2, 2025: work in hand, long lining, lunging, and a demo.
- Riding Clinic TBD

Member Profile

Volunteer Spotlight:

Show Secretary Summary
Alessandra Cockett

This year I had the opportunity to serve as the schooling show secretary for the Connecticut Dressage Association, a role that was both challenging and rewarding. Over the course of three horse shows, I took on various responsibilities that helped me develop essential organizational skills and a deeper understanding of how to run a successful equestrian event.

One of my main tasks was scoring the tests, which required careful attention to detail as I tabulated the judges' evaluations into accurate scores. I also organized and labeled the tests, making sure everything was in order for the judges on show day.

Creating the schedule for the event was another significant responsibility which could be a puzzle, making sure people with more than one ride have enough time between rides, and making sure there are always a few breaks throughout the schedule. As being the point of contact to competitors before and during the show I made sure I scheduled rides that work for the competitors' needs.

On show day, I loved the vibrant atmosphere and seeing familiar faces. Helping riders feel prepared and ensuring their experience was smooth and enjoyable brought me a lot of satisfaction. However, one of the more challenging aspects was managing last-minute entries and adjusting ride times. This required quick

thinking to keep everyone informed and minimize disruptions.

Overall, my experience with the Connecticut Dressage Association taught me valuable skills organization, communication, and adaptability. That I know will benefit me in many areas of life. I'm grateful for the opportunity and excited about the possibility of taking on a similar role in the future.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS FOR CDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

According to the CDA by-laws, adopted February 11, 2006, the membership of CDA must now elect approximately ½ of the Board of Directors for a 2-year term. Of those adults listed below, a total of UP TO FIVE WILL BE ELECTED at the annual meeting being planned for January 26, 2025.

We are listing the proposed slate of Directors in this issue of Centerline for your consideration. If you have any questions, or would like to be put on the ballot, please contact me or Fern Feldman at president@ctdressageassoc.org, and we will add your name to the slate. There will be an opportunity to write in additional candidates on the ballot.

Thank you for your participation in the governance of CDA.

Valerie Blasi, President

PROPOSED SLATE OF DIRECTORS FOR CDA

(Up to 5 adults will be selected)

HEATHER ASHE
KARI BRADSHAW
FERN FELDMAN
JUDY LIEBERMAN
CAROL MOHYDE

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES (UP TO ONE YOUTH CAN BE SELECTED):

(Nominations sent to president@ctdressageassoc.org will be accepted as long as the person nominated agrees to the nomination and is a current member of CDA.)

Board members who are presently in the 2nd year of their 2-year term (thus, not up for re-election) are:

Valerie Blasi, Hanna Calcagni, Roberta Carleton, Denise Clark, Carol DiCarlo, Liz Doering, Christine Engel, Patricia Norcia, Amy Ravitz, Pam Wilhelm.
Youth representative: Ellie Johnson.

General Announcements

Volunteer Information -

There is a need for volunteers! If you are interested in one of these roles, Email Carol Mohyde carolmohyde@icloud.com or Amy Ravitz amy.ravitz@yahoo.com.

Earn USDF Volunteer Recognition – See more at [GMO Volunteer Incentive Program Hour Log](#)

Opportunity to 'Shadow' a Volunteer

– Ask Carol or Amy

USDF Region 8 News

A Message from our Regional Director

Greetings Region 8!

The 2024 Convention is done and dusted and what a great time we had! Region 8 had a good showing. Several people won USDF recognition and year end awards, including Paul Cormier for photography, Emily Larson for First Person Newsletter Article, Kari Cincotta for Regional Volunteer of the Year, and Christine Engel for Most Outstanding GMO Basket. In addition, Bobbi Carleton was at the Gala to receive, among other awards, her Diamond Achievement, which recognizes USDF members awarded the USDF Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals and Freestyle Bars. Bravo everyone.



Bobbi Carleton

There were a number of very interesting educational sessions, including *Black Horse One: You be the Judge*. Attendees were given access to the program and judged an actual videoed ride. Janet Foy and Mike Osinski then led us through a review of the movements, and we were able to compare our own scoring with Janet and Mike's. For a non-judge like me, it was a lot of fun and very enlightening.

Laura Roberts from USEF announced the creation of the US Open for equine sports to include Dressage, Jumping and Eventing open to both US and foreign competitors. In collaboration with ESPN and USEF Network, the goal is to increase fans and viewership. There will be \$250,000 in prize money, with finals in Thermal California at the end of 2025.

Christine Traurig, Team Bronze medal winner and current Chef d'Equipe for the US Dressage Team spoke enthusiastically about the US Team's path to the LA Olympics.

An over-arching theme at the many sessions I attended, was the social license to engage in our sport. David O'Connor, President of USEF made a presentation on this topic and rang the alarm bell that we as a sport need to get ahead of the rapidly changing perception of equine sports. To that end, USEF recently amended the Cruelty to and Abuse of Horse Rule to ensure the safety and well-being of horses on **and off** competition grounds. While there will always be a small segment of the population that will never believe that riding is acceptable, we need to make sure that the very large segment that has no or weak opinions on the topic are not swayed against us. I hope to be able to distribute his presentation as it is an excellent discussion of what we are facing as an industry. And this is a topic that everyone will be hearing a lot about going forward.

There was so much information available at the Convention and this is just a sampling. If anyone would like to hear more, please get in touch.

Finally, looking forward I hope everyone has heard that the Finals will be moving from Lexington to the World Equestrian Center in Wilmington OH 10/30/2025-11/2/2025. The decision to move was based on consistent feedback from Finals' competitors that the weather in KY was terrible. The new facilities will have indoor show rings for all the Championship classes and heated stalls. Something to think about as winter heads into our area!

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season, and I'm looking forward to 2025!

All the best,
Helen
vandeh13@gmail.com

CDA Membership for 2025!

[Click here](#) for renewal directions and to see all the fantastic benefits of membership.

CDA Sponsorship Opportunity in the 2025 Omnibus

The CDA Omnibus is an annual publication distributed to our 175+ members, as well as to other USDF group member organizations nationally. Our membership is represented by active dressage enthusiasts, residing, and competing in the northeast. The Omnibus is an invaluable reference used throughout the year by our members, to get information not only on schooling show in the region, but professional goods and services related to their equine needs!

Please consider sponsoring the Omnibus in 2025 and sharing this with anyone who might benefit or want to support the CDA. We are a not-for-profit organization, and the Sponsorship revenue significantly helps to defray the costs of producing the Omnibus.

DEADLINE FOR IMAGES AND PAYMENT:
01/15/2025

Other inquiries regarding sponsorships in the Omnibus and CDA Website should be sent to Carol at carol@cheshireequestriancenter.com

CDA Sponsors – Connecticut Dressage Association (ctdressage.org)

This year CDA made donations to:
High Hopes, Mitchell Farms,
D4K, Hidden Acres

CDA Scholarships **CDA Scholarships for Youth & Amateurs** **Vista Vintage Educational Scholarship**

CDA offers one or more scholarships per year, per category for CDA members. Check out the details for 2025 on the [CDA Scholarship Web](#) page.

The Vista Vintage **Educational Scholarship**



Through the continued generosity of Vista Vintage Award founder, Ted Plaut, CDA stewards the Vista Vintage Educational Scholarship.

The Vista Vintage Award singles out the best performances by our special senior horses. These are the equine partners who demonstrate that age is no barrier to competing and earning scores to make any rider proud.

The Vista Vintage Award program focuses on the success of 'senior horses. It consists of a \$300 cash prize and an elegant special award.

For more information contact Kari Bradshaw at rkhotoshoe@aol.com.

Philla and Charlie Osborne Volunteer Award

Each year, CDA has the option to give a Volunteer of the Year Award for special service to CDA.

History: The award is named in honor of Philla and Charlie Osborne who donated hours and hours of service to CDA in the 80s and 90s. They were always found at the practice ring at shows (recognized and schooling) checking numbers and entries and letting riders know when they were "on deck". Philla and Charlie also rode for many years with Vicki Hammers-O'Neil and today, Philla owns a horse that is being trained and competed by Vicki.

CDA Rider Achievement Awards

An annual CDA Rider Recognition Program focusing on Juniors and AA's. Qualifying rides must be completed within the current competition year and can be achieved at either schooling or recognized shows.

Scores can be achieved on multiple horses. Training through 4th level. 3 scores, minimum 62% for schooling and 60% for recognized.

Follow CDA on Facebook



CDA Facebook Page

CDA Facebook Pictures Needed

Please submit pictures for the CDA Facebook.

(Submitter needs to own the picture or copyright of the submission.)

Send to president@ctdressage.org

2025 Calendar of Events

***Please check the Website regularly for the status of events Ctdressage.org**

Next CDA Board Meeting

Monday, January 13, 2025 – 6:00 PM

At Fern Feldman's house **OR**

Zoom Meeting will start at 6:30 pm

Contact Fern Feldman | fernfeldman@gmail.com

CDA Sponsored Schooling Shows 2025

Virtual Series – www.spotlighthorseshows.com for prize list and entry

CDA Online Schooling Show# 1

Opens: 1/17/25 – Closes: 2/9/25

Videos Due: 3/2/25

Results: 3/12/25

CDA Online Schooling Show #2

Opens: 3/14/25 -Closes: 4/6/25

Videos Due: 4/27/25

Results: 5/7/25

CDA Online Schooling Show #3

Opens: 5/2/25 – Closes: 5/25/25

Videos Due: 6/15/25

Results: 6/25/25

Sperry View Farm

91 Bethway Rd.

Bethany, CT

5/3/25 "L" Graduate Tara Manion

9/7/25 "L" Graduate w/ Distinction Steve Ruggerio

Weatogue Stables

33 Weatogue Rd.

Salisbury, CT

Weatogue 6/22/25 "L" Graduate w/ Distinction Matt

Beasley

R Folly Farm

380 W. Morris Rd.

Morris, CT

8/10/25 "L" Graduate w/ Distinction Karry Brothers

Belle Free Farm

86 Hennequin Rd.

Columbia, CT

Belle Free 10/2/25 "L" Graduate Virginia Leary

*Please refer to CDA Schooling Show master prize list for details