

Oct/Nov 2024



CENTERLINE



President
Hanna Calcagni

Connecticut Dressage Association

Vice President
Liz Doering
ewdoering@yahoo.com

President's Message

October/November 2024

Membership Coordinator
Denise Clark
337 Park Avenue
Naugatuck, CT 06770
deniseclark1211@gmail.com

Greetings All!

I don't know about you, but I do not remember a more beautiful Autumn in Connecticut. The blues skies, warm temperatures, and incredible foliage have been such a treat! Hope you are enjoying it all with your equine companions.

Recording Secretary
Fern Feldman
fernfeldman@gmail.com

While it has been an honor to serve as president of CDA, my term is coming to an end. I am thrilled to be handing the reins over to Val Blasi who brings a wealth of experience with her involvement in pony club and has been on the CDA board for several years in charge of organizing the omnibus. I will serve as her back up, as the vice president, and will still be involved with the organization of our sponsored schooling shows. So, I am not going anywhere!

Treasurer
Christine Engel
christineengel923@gmail.com

We have been in the initial planning stages of our annual awards party. The date is set for January 26, 2025, at the Lakeview Lodge in Bethany, a repeat location of the last two years. Our expenses have increased quite a bit over the past few years, from the cost of the venue to the cost of the food and even the cost of the awards. For that reason, we will have a charge of \$20 per person to attend this year. Thank you for your understanding.

Centerline Newsletter Coordinator
Pam Wilhelm
wyndendown@gmail.com
Heather Ashe
Hlashe8@gmail.com

Competition Questions
Carol Mohyde
Carol.Mohyde@icloud.com
Amy Ravitz
amy.ravitz@yahoo.com

It is time to renew your memberships to CDA! PLEASE keep an eye out for information on Pegasus – which is a new platform that CDA will be using to organize membership. It will require you to spend a quick minute creating/updating a profile. This effort will be tremendously helpful for us going forward. Stay tuned for the link to Pegasus.

Education Coordinator
Patricia Norcia
pnorcia@mac.com

November 1 was also the opening day for submitting scores for year-end awards. As usual, we will accept the submissions through the website. December 1 is closing day!

Omnibus Coordinators
Carol DiCarlo
carol@cheshireequestriancenter.com
Valerie Blasi
blasivalerie@yahoo.com

Wishing all of you great rides and happy healthy horses!

Silent Auction Coordinators
Carol DiCarlo
Carol@cheshireequestriancenter.com

Warmly,
Hanna Calcagni

Year End Awards Coordinator
Kari Bradshaw
rshotshoe3@aol.com

Youth Representative
Ellie Johnson & Megan Tursi

Social Media Coordinator
Jessica Cockett
Jessica.amber77@gmail.com

Website Coordinator
Paige Rollinson
paigerollinson@gmail.com



Save the Date!
2024 Year End Awards Banquet
January 26, 2025
3:00 – 7:00 pm
Lakeview Lodge in Bethany

<http://www.ctdressage.org>

Check the [CDA Website](#) (under construction) and [Facebook Page](#) for 2024 Event and Horse Show News

Year End Award Submissions

Use links below. These are also available on [FaceBook](#).

Recognized

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvS0zW66OQFfqmrBLURtjnH2q1F-7BuaL9gKjZhE4UxVOLXA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Schooling

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKy04wUZrj8V93fRbLm1qVD_Dwv09SxMg7dMljBE7iWbRZlw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Volunteer

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQN7INejlhH0_EaXtjH8mnfuw96LonBS9cvAo8uPqJYHKLRA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Rider Achievement

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdiTOOQ7HTjqB1YQ_n_akEeUinABlyZn-zHnggF0YS73krYfg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Vista Vintage

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc9jJhLzDtMf3Yw0pQleJCRJUQ8kHkJdF0axbdQITd-0aGC_Q/viewform?usp=sf_link

Schooling Show & Recognized Competitions Awards Criteria for 2024

Active CDA members are eligible to submit scores for the following: Youth, Adult Amateur and Open competitors who compete between November 1, 2023 and October 31, 2024 at the following:

- 1) CDA-sponsored schooling shows.
- 2) Schooling shows whose prize lists appear in the 2024 CDA OMNIBUS.
- 3) Schooling show listings that are published in the CDA website.
- 4) Rider must be a paid member at the time of showing for scores to count for year-end awards.

- **Schooling High Score Awards** for Champion through 6th place for schooling competitions.

- **Recognized High Score Awards** for Champion through 6th place for recognize competitions.

- **Vista Vintage Awards Program** which celebrates competition horses 18 years and older in both recognized and schooling shows.

- **The CDA Rider Achievement Award Program** for Adult Amateurs and Youth for the national levels, Training through Fourth Level, in both schooling and recognized shows.

- **The CDA Volunteer of the Year Program** Sponsored by Philla and Charles Osborne.

Online submissions opened November 1, 2024 and end on December 1, 2024.

Full details and requirements will be outlined on the [CDA Competition](#) web page soon, it is currently under construction.

2024 Clinic Wrap-up

USDF Instructor/Trainer Development Program
Dressage Seminar – Riding
Report by Josephine Hauer

Key Riding Skills

Demonstrate concern for safety.
Apply correct rider position including alignment, balance and use of the aids.
Apply knowledge of the Pyramid of Training, being able to assess the horse while riding and implement changes based on classical dressage theory.
Demonstrate correct training for the horse.
Develop strategic and appropriate plans for improving the horse over time.

Pyramid of Training



Fig 1 USDF

Dressage instructors and trainers from New England and beyond gathered at Weatogue Stables in Salisbury, CT in July 2024 to participate in the 2-day USDF Instructor/Trainer Development Program focusing on dressage riding, co-led by Vicki Hammers-ONEil and Bill McMullin.

Day 1 was open to non-instructors and included presentations and discussion on the Dressage Training Scale and Levels, safety, the evaluation of horse and rider, and the need to plan appropriate exercises to develop both horse and rider.

Four horse and rider pairs offered live demonstrations of riding and instruction that incorporated the training scale to each situation. Each pair brought different strengths and weaknesses and were varied in level of education and type. Bill and Vicki offered insights and suggestions by dialoguing with the rider after the warm-up phase of each demonstration session. Participants were able to observe the nuanced application of insights from instructors on dressage exercises and concepts to improve the work of each pair.

If I walk into an arena, I should be able to observe a horse and rider and know what they are trying to achieve in the session and based on a progression of the exercises. (VHO)

Throughout the day, the Dressage Pyramid of Training was cited as a crucial guide that emphasized the necessary elements for the horse's gymnastic development. Riders should take these qualities into account in every training session.

The triangular form of the training pyramid highlights the importance of establishing the fundamental components—rhythm, suppleness, and contact—as the basis for the other parts rather than depicting a linear development. Every component is connected synergistically and can be enhanced collectively over time.

One example of this back and forth was when a rider was using a shoulder-in to improve suppleness and as a result the horse also showed improved rhythm and contact.

What is your horse's weakest link? For many horses, it is important to establish a good trot before lateral work. But for others, it's the other way around. (BM)

Developing Appropriate Exercises

Selecting an effective exercise to improve the horse is a critical skill to develop. With keen observation, experimentation and practice, riders, trainers and instructors can build their repertoire of exercises in different contexts.

When is the best time to determine which exercises to use?

Riders can plan prior to a schooling session based on past work or suggestions during a previous lesson. After the warm-up phase within a session is also a good time since riders need to work with what the horse brings to the work that day. During a schooling session, riders may also want to choose different strategies based on the response of the horse on the spot.

Vicki and Bill offered important commentary on when and why an exercise worked well or not. Highlights include:

- **Refresh the gait.** Use the short side or the diagonal of the arena to “refresh” the gait. If an exercise is not effective, don't struggle too long; rather, make a change to access the basic correctness again.
- **Improve diagonal connection.** Leg yield is one of the most useful and accessible exercises to improve the diagonal connection – inside leg to outside rein – as well as acceptance of the contact.
- **Observe the base of the horse's neck** when thinking about straightness. Use a head to the wall leg yield to encourage a release at the base of the neck.
- **Promote straightness and collection** by using renvers. In a correctly ridden renvers, the horse's shoulders move to the inside, off the rail, while the haunches continue to travel along the rail, with bend toward the outside of the arena.
- **Collect, supple and straighten** by incorporating counter canter in shallow loops

along the long side of the arena.

- **Prepare well for transitions.** Riders should plan for the specific type of gait desired post-transition. Consider both the tempo of the gait and the bend prior to asking for the transition. Some riders will benefit from using a mental count-down for this: 4-3-2-1.

- **Improve transitions** between any gait by using shoulder-in on the circle.

- **Practice stretching in all three gaits** based on the horse's balance and confidence and re-taking the contact for enhanced suppleness and coordination.

- **Use counter-flexion** to help diffuse tension in anxious horses. This will improve connection by improving alignment.

- **Mix up your horse's routine** with changes of direction to keep the horse from anticipating the next request. When giving any aid to the horse, he should stay forward into the bridle.

Keep in mind that even when things feel good, your horse should be available for a reaction. Ask yourself, is my horse still there? Listening? Can I ask another question and still get an answer? (BM)

We can see the importance of rider fitness – there needs to be sufficient core stability so she can have following hands and seat. Where there is connection between hips and elbows, the arms are not rigid but remain over the hips, making all the aids more effective. (VHO)

Quality of the Gaits – Walk, Trot and Canter
Instructors reviewed the quality of each gait, common faults and possible causes. The walk, a four-beat gait should be marching and forward with no moment of suspension. The trot is a two-beat gait with diagonal pairs. The horse at trot should swing through his back with a moment of suspension between the footfalls. The canter is a three-beat gait starting from the outside hind, then the diagonal pair (inside hind/outside fore), then inside fore, followed by a phase of suspension. Canter is a bounding/jumping gait with energy.

Faults and Possible Causes at the Walk, Trot and Canter

| Gait | Common Faults | Possible Causes |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Walk 4 beats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral pacing or lateral tendency, almost two beats. • Uneven - length of strides differ. • Unlevel – height or breadth of strides differ. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse related – not through back, walk too lazy, walk too hurried, lack of relaxation or suppleness, crooked, rein lameness, uneven contact or unsoundness. • Rider related – stiff hips or core, stiff arms, hands not following, overuse or arrhythmic use of legs and/or spurs. |
| Trot 2 beats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of suspension • Passage-like • Uneven – length of strides differ. • Unlevel – length or breadth of strides differ. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse related – lack of relaxation or suppleness, lack of energy/impulsion, stiff back musculature, crookedness (stiff and hollow sides), uneven contact, rein lameness or unsoundness. |
| Canter 3 beats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four beat rhythm/lateral canter – diagonal pairs do not land simultaneously. • Lack of suspension – flat/hurried. • Lack of clear separation/reach between hind legs. • Cross canter – hind legs on different lead from forelegs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse related – lack of relaxation or suppleness, lack of energy/impulsion, lack of fitness, strength. • Rider related – faulty aids, lacking a balanced seat, misalignment shoulders or hips or holding/pulling on the inside rein. |

Member Profile

Volunteer Spotlight:

Get to know our future CDA president, Dr. Valerie Blasi!



Dr. Valerie Blasi is set to become the president of CDA starting in January 2025. With several years of involvement with CDA, she has made significant contributions to the organization. Valerie's journey with CDA began when her daughter became a youth representative in junior high. Since then, Valerie has been actively involved in the production of the Omnibus and is a familiar face at CDA clinics and shows.

Curious about Valerie's background, I discovered that she is a married mother of two. Her son followed in her footsteps by attending vet school, while her daughter is currently pursuing Business-Econ while continuing her own riding goals through The United States Pony Club and USDF. With a successful small animal veterinary practice spanning two decades, Dr. Blasi has established herself as a dedicated professional. Valerie's love for horses dates back to her youth and she competed in the IHSA during college. After reconnecting with horses through her daughter's riding lessons, she became involved with Sleeping Giant Pony Club before finding her way to CDA. Valerie's active role included coordinating lessons, running meetings, and becoming a regional instructor coordinator.

2025 CDA Sponsored Clinics
More information to follow in Q1 2025



Despite a knee injury, Valerie remains passionate about horses and continues to take lessons at Sperry View Farm. Her current equine companion is Remy, a 25-year-old Dutch Harness Horse. Valerie finds solace and tranquility at the barn, enjoying grooming and connecting with the horses.

During our conversation, Valerie shared her perspective on what makes dressage so special. She emphasized the unparalleled connection one develops with the horses, recognizing the significance of correct connection to the bit and seat. Valerie expressed her awe at the dedication and hard work horses put into their partnership with humans. Furthermore, she highlighted how dressage teaches patience, a quality crucial in our fast-paced society. Valerie believes that dressage is not only about having a well-trained horse but also about the continuous pursuit of learning and discovering how to elicit the desired response.

As the future CDA president, Valerie aims to foster continued involvement from members at all levels. She believes that dressage is not limited to top-level competitors but offers benefits to individuals from various disciplines and those competing at lower levels. Valerie values horsemanship beyond the act of riding and hopes to convey this message through her CDA leadership. Additionally, she seeks to encourage youth engagement in the sport,

recognizing the importance of nurturing the next generation of equestrians.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering for CDA, including scribing, ring stewarding, or other tasks, please contact Amy Ravitz or Carol Mohyde. We can provide training to help ensure that you're comfortable taking on the job.

Send your news and accomplishments to wyndendown@gmail.com. Put CDA Newsletter in the subject line.

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!

October 2024

2024 Regionals are in the books! Congratulations not only to the ribbon winners, but to all of you for making the long weekend a great event. Mother nature was at her most spectacular, the showgrounds were beautifully designed with fresh landscaping, and horses and riders were bright and shiny. Now we're on to the Finals!

If you successfully qualified (or got a wild card) you should have already completed the nomination process. Entries close on October 19. USDF has put together a horse transportation resource for anyone considering competing in the US Dressage Finals. The resource features a forum for competitors to coordinate ridesharing to

save on the cost of attending the finals, as well as recommendations and contact information of transport resources used successfully by previous competitors at the event. Visit the US Dressage Finals forum to start making plans today. More info available here:
<https://www.usdf.org/usdressagefinals/index.asp>

Congratulations to those chosen to participate in the 2024 Absorbine/NEDA Symposium with Gareth Hughes October 19 and 20 at Mt. Holyoke. The participating teams are Devon Pomeroy and Fuerst Dream FOD, Geena Martin and Tip Top, Cassandra Martin and Stella M, Allison Mathy and Legendario dos Diamantes, Rosa Murphy and Hotstuff, Leah Drew and Damons Davian, Maia Barnes and Jamaica B, and Lauren Sammis and Heilines Oh Land.

Gareth Hughes most recently won the 2024 Grand Prix Freestyle at the British National Championships, was Carl Hester's ground person at the Paris Olympics, and was the dressage coach for the New Zealand Eventing Team at the Olympics. The NEDA Symposium is always an excellent learning opportunity and October is a beautiful time to be in Western Massachusetts. Tickets are still available, and information is available on the NEDA website
<https://neda.org/page/2024Symposium>.

Now is the time to start thinking about the Convention in Houston December 4-7. Registration is open and you can find info at <https://www.usdf.org/convention/>. Kate O'Connor organized a very successful silent auction to raise funds to help defray Delegates' travel expenses. Thank you, Kate and the donors, to the auction including Kate, Deb Reinhardt, Misty View Equestrian, Stan Horton, Anita Jaffe, Bobbi Carleton, Siegel Saddlery, Karry Brothers, Diane Holston and Regina Cristo.

I will be contacting you soon to set up a regional meeting in advance of the Convention. If you have anything you would like to add to the agenda, or if you want to ensure I have your email address, please contact me at the email below. Until then...

All the best,

Helen; vandeh13@gmail.com

CDA Membership for 2025!

[Click here](#) 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.

CDA Sponsors – Connecticut Dressage Association (ctdressage.org)

“All the motions we ask our performance horses to do require a functioning sacroiliac joint, including running at speed, tight turns, jumping, lead changes and gymnastic movements. But issues with the SI joint can be challenging to identify, as they can result in any number of vague motion-related problems.”

~ Kenneth L. Marcella, DVM.

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 2024 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 rkhotoshoe3@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

2024 Calendar of Events

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

Next CDA Board Meeting

Monday, December 9, 2024 – 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 2024

Sperry View Farm
91 Bethway Rd.
Bethany, CT
See you in 2025

Virtual Series – www.spotlighthorseshows.com for prize list and entry
See you in 2025!

R Folly Farm
380 W. Morris Rd.
Morris, CT
See you in 2025!

Weatogue Stables
33 Weatogue Rd.
Salisbury, CT
See you in 2025

Belle Free Farm
86 Hennequin Rd.
Columbia, CT
See you in 2025

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