

Aug/Sep 2025



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President's Message**Greetings!**

It's hard to believe we're already in late August! As we start to look forward to the cooler temperatures and long, golden, September days, there's still plenty happening at CDA to get excited about. We have two more schooling shows coming up. Mark your calendars for September 6 at Sperry View Farm and October 4 at Belle Free Farm. We hope to see you there enjoying time in the sandbox with your horses.

July was a highlight for us, as we partnered with USDF to host a two-day clinic with renowned dressage professional Kathy Connelly. The clinic welcomed riders from First Level all the way to the Grand Prix level. We were thrilled to hear that so many participants found the experience valuable and enjoyable. Kathy created a welcoming, educational atmosphere and encouraged auditors to engage. Kathy gave a special lunchtime demonstration on long lining.

A huge thank you goes to Sperry View Farm and Liz Doering for so graciously hosting this event.

In August, we shifted focus to groundwork with an "In-Hand" clinic led by CDA board member Patricia Norcia at her beautiful Idlenot Farm. Patricia generously donated her time and facility to share in-depth instruction on working in-hand, long lining, and lunging techniques. The clinic began with a comprehensive demonstration before moving into individual sessions. It was a wonderful opportunity for participants to further their understanding of how groundwork supports the training under saddle.

Looking ahead, our final riding clinic of the year will be with Lisa Schmidt at Belle Free Farm on October 11. Lisa is a USEF-licensed "S" dressage judge, a seasoned FEI-level competitor and trainer who works with riders across all levels. Her clinics are known for being insightful, encouraging, with valuable takeaways. Take advantage of the opportunity to ride with her! Applications are now open.

CDA remains committed to offering a variety of clinics and schooling shows across the state, giving our members valuable opportunities to learn and connect with the dressage community. And of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers and organizers. A heartfelt thank you to all who contribute their time and energy. You make it all happen!

**Best regards,
Valerie Blasi**

"Correct training does not need strength. Instead, it's about balance and quick coordination paired with knowledge and understanding. For the horse, correct timing of the aids is more important than how strongly they are applied."

~ Susanne von Dietze

2025 CDA Sponsored Clinics

Lisa Schmidt Clinic October 11, 2025
Belle Free Farm Columbia, CT
ENTRY FORM

Lisa Schmidt is a United States Equestrian Federation licensed "S" dressage judge with Young Horse, Dressage Seat Equitation and Musical Freestyle accreditation. She is an FEI dressage competitor and trainer at all levels. She has earned her USDF Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals. Lisa is a member of the USDF L Program Faculty and has trained two 'r' judge's groups. From 2010 to 2016, Lisa was USDF Region 1 Director and a member of the USDF Executive Board. In addition to having completed the USDF Instructors Certification Workshops, Lisa has trained several horses through Grand Prix. She and her students have been successful at many regional championships.

There are a few slots left for rider entries!
Auditors are welcome!



March, Trot, Canter

Kathy Connelly Clinic July 17-18 @SVF

The clinic was very successful. Most every rider expressed that she had appreciated being chosen and had enjoyed her ride. Kathy certainly worked diligently: long lining many horses for a bit;

working through lunch; and giving a full 50 minutes of lessons to each rider.

Being ever mindful of the auditors, Kathy involved the spectators often asking them to score a gait or movement. The speaker system enabled auditors to hear Kathy's instructions, and the food was (as usual) exceptional. First day: hot! Second day: much more comfortable. Christine [Engel] set up 'breakfast', monitored all the releases and the USDF evaluations. Of course, thanks to Liz [Doering] and the Sperry View staff for providing a friendly and perfect venue.

— Pam Wilhelm

Hello! My name is Willow Riston, a student at the Connecticut Dressage Academy. This clinic was a rich learning experience, and I'm grateful to have been part of it.

— Willow Riston

In Hand Techniques

Patricia Norcia, August 2 at Idlenot Farm



It was a beautiful day for the clinic which included a demo of work in hand on short reins, long lines, lunging techniques and a lecture. Six pairs of horse and handler received lessons in the technique of their choosing.

The lecture included explanations of the various in hand techniques: lunging, double lunging, long lining, work in hand on the short reins (aka the Iberian method), and work in hand on the long reins – a method mainly utilized in the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, the Cadre Noir, and the Portuguese and Andalusian schools. The use of the pillars is rare nowadays, but Patricia explained how one or two pillars would be used and shared how advanced groundwork leads to the impressive airs above ground the Spanish Riding School and their Lipizzaner's are so famous for.



Some benefits of work in hand:

- Helps in the training of lateral work
- Great for starting young, green horses
- Helps in restarting horses after injury; good for conditioning
- Adds variety to your training program

- Warms up the stifle and fetlock before you start under saddle work
- Great for when you are not able to ride
- Aids in building a strong bond with your horse



What an excellent clinic. Patricia did a great job explaining the five different work in hand techniques and the theory behind each. These techniques will enhance dressage training and health and well-being of the horse. Thank you, Patricia, for sharing your knowledge!

-- Denise Clark

This Edition's Member Profile is Patricia Norcia and the production of Listen to Me

This interview with Patricia covers the creation and performance of LISTEN TO ME, a play that combines equestrian choreography, storytelling, and art.

The idea was born from Patricia's lifelong love of theater and horses. Years ago, inspired by Picasso's Rose Period paintings—filled with circus scenes and horses—I imagined a performance that could bring those images to life. Fast forward to 2025, when David Kaplan, my longtime collaborator, discovered a photo of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas beneath those very paintings. That moment reignited our vision. Stein had owned the artwork and was a friend of Picasso. David called me, and the creative spark turned into a full production—blending equestrian choreography, theatrical storytelling, and visual art into something truly unique.



CDA: CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THIS PLAY, THE CONCEPT AND CREATIVE VISION?

Patricia: In my life I have always had a love for theater and horses. As an acting student at the Yale School of Drama, I met David Kaplan, who was in the directing program. That was 40 years ago, and we have been fast friends ever since, collaborating in many projects together. I had had the idea, seeing the paintings of Pablo Picasso from the Rose Period, that a theatre piece with horses could be created around these amazing images. It was a happy time for Picasso. He was spending time with a circus and painted many horses and harlequins and circus people. Also, in the Spanish Civil War, he painted his terrifying and very large painting Guernica, which also was filled with horses.

This project never materialized at that time, but fast forward to 2025. David Kaplan was directing LISTEN TO ME, a play written by Gertrude Stein in 1936, starring Kathleen Turner as Gertrude Stein. In his research, he found a photograph of Gertrude Stein and her friend Alice B. Toklas, in their living room in NYC, sitting in armchairs, and above them were the Picasso paintings of the horses and circus! So that is how the vision came about. Gertrude Stein was a friend of Picasso and owned these paintings! David called me, very excited, and so we began collaborating.



CDA: WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE RIDING CHOREOGRAPHY, AND THE ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES YOU USED?

Patricia: In the past, I have ridden and created choreography for countless horse pieces: from the DANCING WITH HORSES company in NYC, to CARMEN with CT Opera Theatre. For this production, David wanted the horses to be actors, rather than dancers in a quadrille style choreography. My goal was to recreate images from the paintings for a moment in time, that the audience may recognize. We had a group of 4 horses that worked together, in formation. They were the Harlequins from the paintings. Jillian Nielsen, a talented costume designer and dressage rider, made beautiful costumes for both horses and riders, matching the color palette of the paintings. I played the role of Lillian, friend to Gertrude, and my horse needed to work alone, not get attached to the group, and deal with my large costume beautifully designed by James Glavan. I also had a microphone, so he had to be comfortable with sound, wind and sometimes feedback. I created the choreography on CT based riders and horses. Keeping in mind to be able to simplify in Romania depending on what kind of horses we had.

CDA: WHAT WAS ROMANIA LIKE AND WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF PERFORMING IN THIS LOCATION?

Patricia: I had never heard of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival in Romania and had no idea that it was the 3rd largest in the world coordinating 200 events (theatre, music, dance, opera, circus) in 10 days. They wanted to honor Kathleen Turner in their Walk of Fame (like Hollywood star) and ran her film PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED, which is her favorite. They also had Bill Murray, Wole Soyinka, and 4 others who were similarly honored. So, when we were invited to perform LISTEN TO ME in Transylvania, I could not believe it would happen!



I was very stressed primarily because communication with Romania was not as prompt as I am used to. When told that we needed 5 horses, they said "No problem! This is Romania, the land of horses. We have 50 of them!" However, it took many months to have a conversation with the horse director, and I never did learn what kind of horses we would get until we arrived.

As it was, they were show jumpers. Most were German or Romanian warmbloods. My horse, Bacardi, even competed at Aachen. The Harlequin horses were all mares and fabulous, as was Bacardi. They were super calm and unfazed by weather, costumes, sound system, or actors running around on the ground. They were very stiff, and not the upper-level dressage horses I had at home, so I adapted choreography to their needs, and I could not have been happier (or relieved) at how wonderful they were.

Transylvania is beautiful, with rolling hills and lovely towns. Sibiu is an ancient, beautiful town, very European. The performance was set up in the large field outside the barn, for 2 sold out performances. We had a lot of trouble with wind, as it was often so strong, that the backdrop would flap, but again horses were unfazed. We were picked up every morning by new Mercedes vans and taken to the barn, then returned to the Golden Tulip, a very nice 4-star hotel with a great restaurant. Everyone was treated beautifully. I was so impressed by the people and the beauty of this land.

CDA: WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU HAVE PREPARING THE RIDERS TO PERFORM COMPLEX ROUTINES WITH SHORT REHEARSAL TIME?

Patricia: I aimed to be as prepared as possible for every eventuality. I had my daughter Francesca Edwards, herself a Grand Prix rider, who had done the choreography in CT and would lead it. I was fortunate to get my friend and coach Rodrigo Matos (he was head rider at the Portuguese School of Equestrian Arts and toured as a rider in the horse spectacular APPASSIONATA). With 2 solid lead riders, I made the quadrille choreography a bit like "follow the leader", so the 2 riders from Romania, could learn it in 4 days. We traveled there before the actors came, to rehearse the new riders and meet our horses. Andrea was a talented young jumper who learned things quickly, and Christian, was a jousting medieval games type rider with a great sense of humor. Christian had a talented bay Lipizzaner mare, who was so good at all the movements but proved to be too herd bound, and spooky, so we had to replace her, as it was dangerous to the actors on the ground.

We worked for hours on foot, to save the horses physically and mentally, and then rode the patterns. We worked intensely and when the actors joined us, we had costumes, set, and sound to deal with for 3 days.

Finally opening night came and was terrific, with everything going smoothly. The second performance had some heavy rain. But all in all, it was a highly successful event.

CDA: ANY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

Patricia: LISTEN TO ME is going back into rehearsal in November to add another 20 minutes of Gertrude Stein's text, and then there is the possibility of performing it in NYC at the Armory on Park Avenue. When Kathleen Turner

received her award, she gave a speech and ended it with "We will be back next year, Romania!" So, who knows? We may even go back to the festival next June.



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!

Greetings Region 8!

August 2025

I hope everyone is having a fun summer so far. As we enter August, there are several important deadlines coming up: The FEI Youth Clinic with Sabine Schut-Kery is coming up in October. Applications are open now and can be found here: <https://www.usdf.org/online-services/applications/youth-clinics.asp?type=fei>. The rider deadline to apply is August 22. **Auditors are welcome!**

The qualifying period for Regionals (at HITS 9/18-21 in Saugerties) is creeping up and ends on August 25th. The schedule of qualifying competitions can be found here <https://www.usdf.org/calendar/competitions.asp> and it looks like the last shows are at Cayuga Dressage in

Horseheads NY, NH Dressage in Fremont NH, and Mystic Valley in Gales Ferry CT.

Declarations for the US Dressage Finals (10/30-11/2) opened on July 1, and the nomination deadline is September 26th. You have nothing to lose by declaring – its free, and hey, you never know... The Finals have been moved to the World Equestrian Center in Wilmington Ohio where the stalls are heated!

Awards nominations include:

1. The Youth Volunteer of the Year – nominations are due by 8/31. <https://usdf.org/awards/service/youth-voy.asp>
2. USDF Nomination for USEF Youth Sportsman's Award - applications due 8/15 <https://usdf.org/awards/other-awards/youth-sportsman.asp>
3. Youth Convention Scholarship – applications due 8/31 <https://usdf.org/awards/other-awards/youth-convention-scholarship.asp>

Please spread the word and encourage our youth members to apply for the USDF Nomination for the USEF Youth Sportsman's Award and the Youth Scholarship.

Further, we need nominations for the Youth Volunteer of the Year by 8/31. Please reach out to your friends, colleagues, trainers, etc. and encourage their involvement. If you have any specific questions about any of these programs, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah at sdelahanty@usdf.org.

As I write this, two of our region's youth are off to Traverse City for the North American Youth Championships. Quentin Sloan and his partner Finn will compete in the Young Riders and Juliana Sardelli and her partner Cupid will compete in the inaugural Children's Division. Good luck to both!

And we have a solid group of youth who have qualified for the US Dressage Festival of Champions at the end of this month. Congratulations to Leah Drew and JazzBeat, Sophia Forsyth and DiMagico, Finley Peterson and Chrevi's Camelot, McKenzie Dicks and Destar, and Sophia Rutherford and Twist of Fate.

Please forward me any information about show and clinic schedules and I will be sure to include it in my newsletters.

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)



Vicki Hammers-O'Neil

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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 rkhotoshoe3@gmail.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 Jessica.amber77@gmail.com

2025 Calendar of Events

Next CDA Board Meeting Monday, September 15, 2025 – 6:00 PM At Fern Feldman's house
OR Zoom Meeting will start at 6:30 pm
Contact Fern Feldman | fernfeldman@gmail.com

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

****Please note that we will have Western Dressage classes at our CDA sponsored shows. Western Dressage will be eligible for year-end awards.**

CDA sponsored Shows

CDA @ Virtual Show #1
Judges: Dressage Lori Barnard (S), Western Dressage: Joann Williams (R)
RESULTS BY CLASS

CDA @ Virtual Show #2
RESULTS BY CLASS
Dressage Susanne Hamilton (S), Western Dressage: Joanne Coy (R)

CDA @ Virtual Show #3
RESULTS BY CLASS
Judges: Dressage Anne Cizadlo (S), Western Dressage: Mary Mahler (R)

Saturday 5/3/2025 CDA @ Sperry View Farm
Judge: Tara Manion "L" Graduate
RESULTS

Sunday 6/22/2025 CDA @ Weatogue Stables
Judge: Matthew Beasley "L" Graduate with Distinction

<https://www.weatoguestables.com/services>
RESULTS

Sunday 8/10/2025 CDA @ R Folly Farm
Judge: Karry Brothers "L" Graduate with Distinction
RESULTS

Sunday 9/7/2025 CDA @ Sperry View Farm
(opening date: 8/16/25 – closing date: 8/30/25)
Judge: Steve Ruggerio "r" Graduate

Saturday 10/4/2025 CDA @ BelleFree Farm
(opening date: 9/13/25 – closing date: 9/27/25)
Judge: Virginia Leary "L" Graduate with Distinction