



The Half Halt

The Newsletter of the Central Vermont Dressage Association

President's Message

Another show season for CVDA has come to an end and what a great year it has been! All the shows were filled and had waiting lists. Development Days were very popular and they filled quickly. Many people got lots of educational training tips from them that improved their riding and their showing. There were good responses from all members about the judges and trainers. We always look for new people to bring in as judges and trainers in addition to finding new ideas for clinics, membership and education, so please remember to fill out the Membership Survey that is coming around via email and is posted on our Facebook page. We need this information so that we can look for innovative ideas that will benefit members and encourage new membership.

We also had a very fun-filled educational clinic with Anne Gribbons . Everyone was pushed and worked hard to improve.

Katherine Adams was given our training grant to bring in Lauren Sprieser for a clinic. This grant is a wonderful opportunity to supplement clinics to make them affordable. Members should take advantage of this!

We are looking forward to the Annual Dinner being at a new location this year - Hotel Coolidge in White River Junction. Liz Austin will be our guest speaker and she is always very upbeat and fun while being educational. I hope to see lots of people taking advantage of this.

We have many board openings this year, so please vote and send your ballots back. We are excited to now offer online board meetings so we will be able to expand to board members from further away. Plus we will now have the convenience of not having to brave winter weather to get to meetings. We are also updating the website this year and will offer online membership, hopefully by the beginning of the year.

-Kathi Bruce

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Summer Development Day

By Louise Duda

“I loved it – soup to nuts! I love this facility. I love the welcoming atmosphere. I love breathing in the views! I love visiting the nearby tack shop! I loved my lessons!” Jennifer Keller

Enthusiastic support for Development Day was the overwhelming sentiment expressed during evaluations of this year’s event. CVDA had two outstanding judge/instructors in Katie Rocco and Catherine Hill Waterman and this manager heard nothing but raves about how much riders learned in a short time frame. The weather could not have been more idyllic and the GMHA grounds well turned out. We had a seasoned batch of volunteers that made sure things ran smoothly as well as helped set up for the show the following day. Thanks to Sharon Sweet, Janet McMahon, Michelle Kingston, Adrienne Tedesco, and Becca Rice for making this day possible!

-Weezie Duda, Manager



Katie Hill Waterman helps Lisa Curry Mair and Winslet

“As a trainer, I loved CVDA’s choice of clinicians because I can confidently put my riders in front of them and know they are going to get clear, correct instruction in a kind and encouraging manner. They are right on the nose but positive.” Heidi Hauri Gill



“This day provided fascinating, intense learning experiences from the very basics to riding upper level performances! And I appreciated that lots of competitors came up to thank me for volunteering – made me feel great!” Janet McMahon (left), Ring Steward

“The instructor (Waterman) honed in on rider weaknesses and gave excellent exercises that worked really well to improve those areas. She focused on struggles but in a positive way.”

Lisa LaBlanc

“Katie Rocco was super helpful in breaking down some of our issues into manageable parts and helped us work them out.” Megan Castillo

Summer Schooling Show

CVDA Congratulates our Summer Schooling Show High Score Recipients!

Junior Training Level - Taylor Evans and *Cielo Dorado* 77.826%
Junior 1st Level - Sophie Roe & *Cisco* - 66.471%
Senior Training Level - Polly Schmid & *Wonderful* - 72.174%
Senior First Level- Katherine Bruce & *Super Exclusive* - 70.185%
2nd Level and Above - Lisa Mair & *Winslet* - Third Level Test 1 - 72.576%
Event Division - Sue Berrill & *Beaulieu's Quality Road* - 76.5 %
Intro Jr - Finley Peterson & *Heaven's Ridge Patrick Le Beau* - 75.313%
Intro Sr. - Christine Thompson & *Tupelo Honey* - 74.688%

Many thanks to our wonderful volunteers for making this event run so well!

Two Clinics

Anne Gribbons Clinic

by Jeanne Woodward Poore

This year CVDA was lucky enough to sponsor a clinic with Anne Gribbons, held at Pirouette Farm on August 5th and 6th. Anne commands a high price as a clinician so CVDA heavily subsidized this weekend. Although it was still pricey, each rider got a subsidy of over \$300 from CVDA. Auditing by members of CVDA was free, and many of the auditors interviewed agree that there is much learning to be had from auditing, maybe even more than from riding!

Those of us who audited for any length of time noticed that Anne tended to use many of the same exercises with the different riders but in different ways. Riders ranged from Training level to Fourth and above. Some of the things Anne stressed were:

- *Be quick with the aides, both negative and positive
- *Use lateral work to activate the hind leg
- *Transitions (especially down) are invaluable
- *Slow down to create cadence and improve the gaits
- *Don't repeat an exercise once the horse has "gotten it"



Anne Gribbons with Nancy Magnum and Canequin's Local Hero.

Almost all of the riders were asked to be quicker with corrections, which is not to say Anne didn't also reward correct work as indicated by the request for a second box of sugar. The key is to quickly correct before things fall apart. An example would be to ask for more jump in the canter when it becomes flat, and not to wait until the horse breaks to the trot. This was especially important with the younger, greener horses who were developing the strength and carrying power to maintain correct work. Quick aides were stressed with almost all the horses, as well as rewards. While we are on the subject of correction, Anne said more than once and in many ways that, "Dressage is not a democracy, but a benign dictatorship." At another point she said, "There is nothing worse than a horse with a good idea. Dressage is hard for horses, some more than others, and we need to be clear, honest and quick with our instructions to make what we are asking our horses to do as easy as it can be."

Anne had many riders use the quarter line leg yield to B or E finishing the long side in shoulder-in. This exercise was equally helpful in the lower and upper levels to activate the

hind leg and get it under the horse. She stressed this, going so far as to say with a very talented horse, "Everything is about keeping the hind leg under him in slight shoulder-fore." She asked riders to ride in shoulder-fore or shoulder-in and especially to do all transitions in shoulder-fore. "Using lateral work will improve the gaits creating the cadence and air time needed to develop medium and lengthened gaits."

Anne mentioned many times that transitions, especially down transitions, are crucial in the training. "Transitions are all about the hind leg. A horse's brakes are in his butt, she explained, but that doesn't come 'in the package', you have to train it." Anne asked one rider not to work on the lengthenings and extensions, but to do many transitions and the rest will come. And she reminded us again that all those transitions should be done in shoulder-fore.

Another aspect of creating the medium and lengthened gaits is to slow the gaits down. When horses are moving too fast (not to be confused with forward) they do not have the "air time" they need to improve the trot or do changes, for instance. In one case, Anne asked the rider to add "two drops of passage" to the trot to create cadence. In this same lesson she pointed out that you can't ask for lengthening out of a tiny grounded trot. "If you do they will just run."

Finally Anne reminded all of us to quit when it is good, and be quick to reward. When it improves, you should be done; it doesn't have to be perfect! She expects us as riders to be clear and honest with our horses, but the ideas are ours, not theirs. We have to stick to human ideas and not allow our horses to talk back to us. It is always better to keep the drama out of the training and some of our horses are more prone to drama than others, so those riders especially, have to be robots, lest the drama take over. As much as we love our horses, they can't be left to their own devices!

Interestingly enough the following link will bring you to an article Anne Gribbons wrote about going to clinics. It is an excerpt from Collective Remarks. I found it to be a timely reminder.

<https://equestrianontario.com/the-problem-with-teacher-hopping/?v=7516fd43adaa>

The Horses and their Riders

Diane Andrews rode her horse Apollo, a 6 year old TB/Percheron cross purchased as a 4 year old. Apollo and Diane are working on forward, through and over the back.

Amadeus CCR, "Lefty," ridden by Lisa Lewis is a 14 year old Hanoverian/Trakehner cross gelding. He is currently returning to work and the show ring at first/second level after a lengthy break.

"Benedict CF" is a six year old Hanoverian gelding, owned by Mary Ann Reich of Mendon, VT and ridden by Joy Congdon. After a very successful Training Level debut in 2016, they

are taking a year off of showing to gain strength and skills to compete at Third Level on 2018.

Lisa Mair's "Winslet" (affectionately called "Kate") is a 7 year old Hanoverian mare. Kate and Lisa have been steadily working their way up the levels and are currently working on all of the Third level movements

Mary Piro is an amateur rider and an owner of Pirouette Farm. Napali is a 16-year-old Oldenburg by Harvard. Mary is hoping to work with her sensitive, huge-moving horse to achieve her USDF Silver Medal.

Clare is Lisa Geovijan's 15 year old Hanoverian homebred. She has been working to turn her hard-to-handle, hot, tense mare into a much more agreeable partner.

Lynn Freeman is a former event rider who is hooked on dressage and feels incredibly lucky to have Harley as her willing partner. She is hoping Harley will train her before she untrains him.

Nancy Mangum is an AA riding her 22 y/o Morgan Canequin's Local Hero. Nancy has done all of Hero's training herself and they have both their Bronze and Silver medals and two scores toward the Gold. All on one horse!

Harriet King is an amateur riding out of her Three Brooks Farm in Warren, Vermont. Snow Song is a home bred, 16 year old, Anglo-Trakehner paint mare, formerly a preliminary event horse ridden by Harriet's son B.R. King.
May Schooling Show

Lauren Sprieser Clinic

by Katherine Adams

Lauren Sprieser is well known as a rider who has developed many young horses to Grand Prix winners and as a blogger for Chronicle of the Horse, but there are two other titles she deserves after her clinic held in September at Orchard Knoll Farm, Tunbridge Vermont: "Clairvoyant and task master."

Within the first steps of the nine participating horses warming up she saw fundamental weaknesses in riders' positions or techniques and she focused on those for the two days of work. Once a problem was solved she added new exercises to re-enforce and strengthen the initial corrections.

Lauren made these corrections with wit and kindness. While never being harsh, she drilled the point home. If there was an overall point that she made for 3/4 of the riders it was about the straightness of the horse. We have all heard it a million times: "Inside leg to

outside rein.” However, it became clear, ride after ride, that as the various riders had been moving up the levels that very basic tenant was being lost. It was clear that she felt that a horse could not progress without the hind end being engaged CORRECTLY,(and most of us had been giving up our outside rein for other things), and that not only did the horse become more compact tail to head but from side to side. To get that fancy dancy footwork, we all needed to remember that straightness had to be there. For those of us riding at lower levels she still had very insightful and constructive corrections in basic riding positions and had to say more than once we were riding livestock that needed to remember what their jobs were and we would not hurt them by using our legs, whips, and reins in a precise and correct manner (which in my case meant thinking about an ex -fiancee and smacking my horse and he was fine - the horse that is.)

When asked, Lauren said that her stern use of outside rein only (by giving up the inside rein) was not to be maintained forever. In the car ride to the airport she spoke of only having two days to give us something that we could apply to our riding for forever and that with our instructors’ guidance we would build in finesse. I will forever ride thinking that my ankles wrap around my horse to lift his rib cage and will be forever grateful for this image to position myself correctly. Lauren did not expect the advice she gave me to be applied to every rider because every horse and rider are different but a really big light bulb went on for me.

I would recommend reading her blog to get a sense of her humor and determination. We will see her at the olympics on a horse that she has trained as a young beast and we will see her promoting, “protecting our melons” (wearing our helmets), and treating our horses well.

She also gave CVDA a great complement. She said, “This is the nicest club I have ever held a clinic for. Everyone was interested, listened, engaged and was loads of fun to be around.” We rock CVDA.

CVDA Member Bio- Sammi Savage

I got my first pony, "King," when I was 8. I showed King in jumping, dressage, and every schooling show and fairgrounds my parents would take me to. Two years later my parents bought me an Appaloosa named "Red Hot Target," and my eventing career began. I attended many clinics and GMHA Eventing Camp with Red Hot Target that year, and I showed him as much as possible. While I was competing on the eventing circuit, my parents turned our dairy farm into an equine facility. We held many western events there including AQHA shows, and held weekly team penning and sorting competitions. For fun, I would team pen and do sorting on my mother’s horse, "Trigger." I competed in several AQHA shows at our farm when not eventing, and worked at our equine facility every day after school with local veterinarian and AQHA competitor Roger Osenchuk. It was an incredible learning experience.



Sammi Savage and Choice

My love of horses was so strong that I decided to go to Ocala, Florida for the winter competition season. I became a working student for Jon Holling and competed Red Hot Target. It was an amazing experience and I continued to live in Florida during the winter months. I loved eventing and worked with and for many incredible trainers, including Karen O'Connor and Olympian Darren Chiacchia.

I began to become more involved with dressage while working at the U.S. Eventing Training facility, Longwood Farm. I rode and helped train many horses to move up the levels of dressage. The following summer, I worked for Gunnar Ostergaard in Chester, VT and started to compete in rated dressage shows. I purchased my first warmblood, "Lucky Luke," and earned my USDF Bronze medal with him. During this

time, I worked for and trained with many established equestrians including Emily Kannenstine, Jessica Van Ecyk and Eline Eckroth. The following year I earned my Silver Medal with Lucky Luke!

After many years of traveling back and forth to Florida, I decided to stay in Vermont to take over my parents' equine facility and run my own program. I now teach, train and board many breeds of horses at the farm. In the past few years, I have continued to show in the western word for fun. I ride my horse, "Partner in Crime," in Western Dressage and Western Pleasure shows, and I own several horses that I use for lessons.

This past year, I purchased my dream horse, "Choice." Choice is a Dutch Warmblood that I have been showing this summer at Prix St. Georges. We will be competing at the Regional Competition this fall.

I love all horses and all disciplines of riding and have competed in many different types of shows with several different horses. I have attended countless lessons, clinics and events and am a CVDA representative. I have worked with Olympic riders and 4 year-olds on a mini horse. My goals are to keep learning, having fun and competing.

We would love to hear our members' stories. Please send yours to Wendy Currie for inclusion in an upcoming Half Halt!

Please vote! Positions on the CVDA Board are ready to be filled. Please check your mailer for a ballot and send it back ASAP.

Fall Schooling Show

There was a great turnout for the Fall Schooling Show on September 10 at GMHA. Judges Keith Angstadt and Krystal Wilt had a full day of rides and the weather was perfect.

High Scores were as follows:

Eventing TOC (Beginner Novice Test B) - Jay McGarry - 69.08%

Training Level Jr. - Kylie Tuttle (Training Level Test 3) - 66.8%

Training Level Sr. - Deb Dean Smith (Training Level Test 3) - 72.955%

First Level Jr. - Sophie Roe (First Level Test 2) - 67.031%

First Level Sr. - Debbie Irwin (First Level Test 3) - 66.593%

Intro Jr. - Finley Peterson (Intro Test B) - 70.0%

Intro Sr. - Sarah Eastman (Intro Test C) - 70.25%

2nd Level & Above - Rebekah Smith (2nd Level Test 1) - 70.303%



L toR: Lisa Geovjian, Sara Koby, Sara's Amerika and Lisa LeBlanc at the Fall CVDA Show.

CVDA Annual Banquet

All members are invited to join us at the Hotel Coolidge in White River Junction on November 4th. Get together with everyone, meet some new people and talk horses ALL night! Liz Austin is our special guest speaker and is sure to entertain us all with her stories of training from babies to Grand Prix. Year End Awards will be presented and special awards will be given to those who give most to the organization.

The dinner is being provided by Coventry Catering and includes things like Braised Beef Short Ribs, Poached Salmon with Lemon Caper Sauce and White Mushroom Lasagna. Cocktails at 6:00; Dinner at 7:00 pm.

Be sure to sign up early. A mailing will be going out soon with more info and forms. We hope to see you there!

Be a TABLE SPONSOR at the Banquet; it's a win- win! Get your business name out to the membership and help defray the costs of the dinner to CVDA. Please send a check for \$50 to "CVDA" to Amy Plavin at 403 Parker Hill Rd, Bellows Falls, VT 05101. Include your business card or logo for the sign which will be made for "your" table.