



Midwest Dressage Association

July 2023 Newsletter

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The President's Paragraphs



Greetings MDA Members! I just spent 4 days hiking in the Upper Peninsula with my husband, covering 43 miles of Lake Superior's shoreline. As it turns out, that's far too many miles for recreational hikers like us. We survived, but various appendages and joints will not be on speaking terms with us for days, if not weeks. Anyway, as I was limping along for ungodly numbers of hours each day, schlepping 40+ lbs and dreading yet another night on the ground in a tent, my mind kept circling back to what had driven me to take on such a challenge (never mind call it a VACATION). The answer, I determined, lay in my relationship with my husband. This backpacking adventure was important to him. And, since he's supportive of my passion for dressage competition, I needed to be supportive of his Upper Peninsula hike. Let's face it, having a horse is a lifestyle. The responsibilities, and distractions, are present 7 days a week. The

financial drain is constant, and the emotional toll can be high. Once we step into the role of a horse owner/ lessee/ rider, it takes over our lives. Balancing our passion for our sport with our families, work and friends can be tricky.

Fortunately, what I've discovered in the past ten years is that everyone benefits when I maintain a wholesome balance between the energy expended on horses and energy expended on family. Good riding requires calm, focused confidence. Balancing my personal priorities has been a critical piece in creating positive relationships with my horses and my people. Carrying that theme a bit further, I'd like to thank my husband for being understanding and supportive of my passion for dressage. His patience, faith and respect have been instrumental to any success I've had in the past ten years. I hope all our members appreciate the tradeoffs our families accept while we're pursuing our passion. We all need to give thanks, early and often, for their help and enthusiasm.. And be willing to hike a few miles in support of their dreams too.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer, enjoying lessons, clinics and shows with their horses, friends and families!

Best Regards,

Holly Zecchin
President
Midwest Dressage Association

[Upcoming Events](#)

GLASS-ED Hosting L Program

GLASS-ED is hosting an L Program this fall and winter. They are currently accepting participants and auditors. More details are on the [GLASS-ED website](#).

MDA Hosting Karen Robinson Freestyle Clinic in October

MDA will be hosting a freestyle clinic with Karen Robinson October 28-29, 2023. The location is still TBD, although we're very close to finalizing a venue. We will be posting

the details of format, cost and location soon. Anyone interested in riding in the clinic should contact Holly Zecchin at Holly@midwestdressage.org.

Year End Awards Qualifications

MDA members are eligible to earn year-end awards for Schooling Shows, Para-Equestrian, Western Dressage, and Recognized shows. Below are helpful reminders about qualification requirements. It's your responsibility to [read the MDA Redbook](#) for complete details about these year-end award programs including all qualification requirements, eligibility, tests, minimum percentage score requirements and complete rules.

Key Points about Year End Awards

- Scores must be from one (1) horse/rider combination.
- Show scores must be (mandatory for ALL divisions):
 - from three different judges
 - from three different shows
 - on three different dates
 - For Schooling Shows-Traditional Dressage, Schooling Shows-Western Dressage, and Recognized-Traditional Dressage show scores, one (1) of the scores must be from the highest test of the level shown (ex: Training 3, WD Intro Level Test 4, etc.)

MDA Redbook Trivia

Each newsletter, we'll feature a question based on the [MDA Redbook](#).

Answer to the last trivia question: ***Who is the model horse for the MDA logo? Who did he belong to?***

Dark Warrior is the model horse for our logo. Dark Warrior was trained to the Grand Prix level by his owner, Violet Hopkins, who was self-taught. The only outside assistance she had in the training for the Grand Prix level was an occasional 2-3 day session when someone of the right caliber came to the area and when Chuck Grant's busy exhibition and showing schedule allowed him to fit a session with her. When the time came, Dark Warrior was buried at Vi's training facility and home, Tristan Manor. He is just outside of the indoor arena . He rests in peace at the



end where the letter C sits.

Can you answer this trivia question?

What are 3 current USDF programs that were started as a part of MDA?

The answer will be in the next MDA newsletter.



MDA Member Profile

This year we are featuring member profiles in each MDA newsletter. [Complete the MDA Member Profile Form](#) to be included in a future newsletter.

Alexandra Pollack

Our profile this month features MDA Board Member and Wyn Farm Show Manager Alexandra Pollack.



Rider Status: Adult Amateur

Why are you an MDA member? I joined the Wyn Farm Show Series in 2020 and was introduced to MDA through our partnership. They were so amazing I wanted to join and volunteer for the program.

What do you enjoy most about dressage? I find it beautifully showcases the relationship and trust between horse and rider.

What discipline do you show? English

What breed of horses do you own? POA and a mini

What is your horses' names? Hazel (Grim Grinning Ghost) & Kia (Madame Leota)

MDA Grant Awardee Report: Bill McMullin Clinic, "1,2,3 Contact!"



Contributed by MDA member Jane Manfredi, DVM, PhD, DACVS-LA, DACVSMR (Equine), USDF Bronze, Silver, and Gold medalist

Eight horse and rider pairs spanning from Intro to Grand Prix had a great 2-day clinic with Bill McMullin (USEF 'R' Dressage Judge, a USDF Gold Medalist, and a USDF Certified Instructor and Faculty member) hosted by Katie Foster at CanterWorks Dressage, LLC. (Mason, MI). **I had the good fortune to have been able to**

participate after receiving an adult amateur training grant from Midwest Dressage Association (MDA) to focus on training the passage, piaffe, and tempi changes needed to move my mare Anastasia up to Intermediate A/B. This was my 7th clinic with Bill, and his insightful, logical, step-wise approach to teaching resonated with myself and the rest of the riders- concepts from day 1 were built upon successfully in day 2. Themes that emerged from the clinic included contact and alignment (of horse and rider) and below I will describe some of the exercises used to strengthen these key aspects of the training pyramid.

One of the first exercises that Bill had several of the pairs do worked to improve both contact and alignment. Deceptively simple, we picked up the canter on the rail and on the long side developed haunches in, then while Bill counted 1, 2, 3, he had us transition in a (mostly?!) controlled manner over three strides into shoulder in. Once in shoulder in, we asked for a half halt to engage our horse's hindquarters and then pushed them forward into a brief uberstriecken moment to ensure the horses were in self-carriage. This exercise was performed from once (me) up to several times (we are looking at you gorgeous Grand Prix mare!) on a long side.

Contact was also addressed at the walk. My mare has a tendency to brace and prevent or slow half halts from going through (particularly to the left), which causes issues when the tempi changes start to get closer and closer together (eek!). It also leads to some hollowness of her back in the passage which prevents her front legs from achieving the lofty heights that seem so possible when watching her run away from me in the paddock. The exercise Bill had us start with to address this involved a 10 meter volte at the walk (of course there had to be circles in here somewhere- it is dressage after all!). In the circle, he had me flex to the inside and take a few steps as a turn on the forehand to the outside, then once she yielded, I released lightly into a halt before walking forward on the circle and repeating the exercise. I found I was able to use lighter aids and incorporate this idea onto straight lines which helped with the passage and in between changes to soften her jaw and relax her topline by creating correct bend for each lead.

Correct horse alignment was fostered by a fun exercise done at the canter (but it could be done at the trot or walk too!) switching between a half pass from the corner to the quarterline, to a leg yield from quarterline over X to the next quarterline (switching the bend but maintaining the same lead), to half pass right again from quarterline to the rail. Leg yields along the rail also helped create straightness and thoroughness in several pairs.

Correct rider alignment was facilitated by several Bill-"isms" voiced to multiple riders including, "ride like you are bow legged (to avoid your pelvis from pitching forward), elbows at your side and by your hips (those darn elbows!), lats down (my absolute favorite to bring my shoulders back and settle me into my seat), don't tip forward" and the like.

All of the above better prepared me for the work we did on day 2 with the tempi changes and the passage/piaffe. Specifically, he had me work on the tempi changes towards the mirrors on the quarterline so I could have visual input into my mare's straightness. A key component to working the changes which I, in my eagerness, often forget, is to not just do line after line of changes (I know, I know, but I get excited!), but to always do a circle or on the next long side, check that I can do some really collected canter in the middle of it to prevent the mare from losing the quality of the canter (including the balance) needed for good changes. The feel of the easier half halt that I gained from the walk volte work really helped her stay quiet and not braced for the changes and the 3's and 2's were solid. We were able to do a few "tick tocks" aka a change/change one tempi without her getting too frazzled, so the future is bright!

For the passage, two elements helped to improve it. The first being to work into it from a trot half pass, and the second to think (or actually do!) a medium trot into it. The first exercise helped her relax into the collection needed for passage, keeping her softer in the mouth because of the slight bend, and the latter brought the energy needed to eventually reach the heights to really show her talent successfully. Now if I can only manage to merge the feelings I got from both, it would be fantastic, but that's for the next clinic 😊!

Overall, much fun and learning were had by all. Combined with a great facility and staff, along with fabulous brownies, what else could you ask for in a clinic? Many thanks to the MDA for sponsoring me for this experience.



About MDA

About

The Midwest Dressage Association (MDA) Inc, founded in 1969, is a charter group member of the United States Dressage Federation (USDF). MDA is an organization whose purpose is to promote and encourage a high standard of accomplishment in dressage in the general area of the midwestern United States, primarily through educational programs. MDA welcomes all horse enthusiasts, whether they ride or not, to be members. We are one of the largest Group Member Organizations (GMOs) in Region 2. We are strictly a volunteer run organization headed by an eleven member Board of Directors. We hold monthly Board meetings which are open to everyone. Our committees, chaired by Board members, welcome all MDA members to participate. Volunteers are a very valuable resource to MDA as it takes a whole stable of workers to ensure that our shows and events remain successful.

Contact Us

[Our Website](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[MDA Board of Directors and Committees](#)

[Find Us on Facebook](#)

2023 Recognized & Schooling Shows

Additional 2023 recognized and schooling shows will be included in future newsletters.

Information about MDA's Competitive Programs for shows can be found in our [2023 Redbook](#).

Schooling Shows

[Aberdeen Farm](#)

May 20

June 24

July 29 and 30

August 27

September 17

*September 30

CMHA

June 10
July 22
August 26

East Creek Stables at [Hunter's Run Farm](#)

June 4
July 30
August 27
September 17

Great Lakes Dressage Club

September 17

Matador Farm Schooling Show at Rattlewood Farms

July 1

Michigan Justin Morgan Horse Association

July 30

[Woodbine Farms](#)

May 21
June 4
June 25
July 9
July 23
Aug 20

[Wyn Farm](#)

May 6 & 7
June 10 & 11
July 15 & 16
August 12 & 13
September 9 & 10

Barn Directory

Aberdeen Farm

3500 7 Mile Road

South Lyon, MI 48178

Contact Donna Donaldson 248-347-4411

www.aberdeenfarm.weebly.com

Lessons and training

Arena rental by the hour indoor and outdoor

MDA and USDF participating schooling shows

Available for clinics

Brek-n-Ridge

Andrew Figures

7359 S Lake Shore Dr,

Harbor Springs, MI 49740

231-242-0012

Boarding, lessons, Clinics, Rehab, Training

Freestyle Farm

Erin Miles

1730 N Oxford rd.

Oxford Mi 48371

248-326-5885

We are a full care boarding facility for dressage riders. We offer lessons, showing (schooling and recognized) and clinics. Our facility offers rolling green pastures, trails, indoor and outdoor arena and oversized stalls. Stalls cleaned and fresh water daily.

Grain twice a day, hay fed 3 times a day.

Find us on Facebook and Freestyle Farm

Kathy Card

4364 S. Mackinaw Rd

Bay City, MI 48706

989-239-9363

Boarding, Training for horse and rider, Hunt seat, Jumping, Dressage, Western

Rivendell Stables

Linda Cooper

11555 W Grand River Avenue

Lowell, MI 49331
(616) 897.8976
<http://www.rivendellstable.com>
Boarding Lessons Training
Dressage, Eventing, and Show Jumping

Royal K Riding Center, Kate Westfall
17026 J Drive North,
Marshall, MI 49068
616-706-5049
I offer boarding, lessons and training.

Sue Hughes
8788 Joy Road,
Plymouth, Michigan 48170.
234-604-2439

email prideandjoyfarm@yahoo.com

No Boarding, Trailer in for lessons or will travel to clients. r judge in English Dressage
R judge in Western dressage. Enjoys giving clinics from the very beginning through
third level English and 5th level Western. Youngster clients 12 year of age. No limit
above that.

Classifieds

MDA members may place classified ads in our monthly newsletter. Email
leah@midwestdressage.org to place an ad.