



# Alpha Dressage News

January / February 2024

***A word from our new President, Donna Sloben***

Hi everyone! I hope you have all had a great holiday season! We are looking forward to another good year filled with lots of learning and fun!

Alpha Dressage has been around for more than 50 years now, and I think that speaks to the people who have been involved. As Linda Roberts said at the banquet, the club is full of supportive people who want to help and see you succeed, even when life is tough, and she felt welcomed. When I joined, I remember how friendly everyone was and how welcomed I felt too. I think that says a lot about this group of people. As the incoming president, I would like to thank the outgoing president Linda Roberts for all the time and effort she has put in over the last several years, not only as the president, but as the secretary before that and many years doing the newsletter, not to mention all the help she has given in the last couple of weeks. It is not an easy position to fill, and I only hope that I will do a good job for you and help to guide and move this club forward. I cannot do this alone though, so thank you to all the people on the board who will do as much and probably more than me to see Alpha Dressage into the next year!

We are all on this journey together with these amazing animals and with that in mind, I would love to see Alpha give back a little this year. I propose that we put together a volunteer workday at an equine rescue facility. We all know how hard it is to keep a barn and property in good repair and the horses happy and healthy and it's twice as hard on a limited budget. So, I would like to see us as a club, spend a day helping out! Are you up for the challenge?? Watch for future information as I get things lined up.

This season's schooling shows are all set in place for this year and there is another polo match in the works! I think everyone who attended last year had a great time, so we're doing it again! We are also looking into the possibility of planning a group trip to WEC in Ocala at some point this year.

Due to a case of strangles reported in the Fort Meyers area, in an abundance of caution, we have had to cancel the Lauren Sprieser clinic in Punta Gorda for this year, but hope to schedule her again next year. It was very disappointing, but we have a couple of other clinics already in the works for this year, so stay tuned!

Our meetings will continue to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month with 1 or 2 exceptions. We'll be sure to keep you posted. I know that the meetings are at a difficult time for a lot of us who have horses and families that need to be fed, but we would like to see the attendance grow. It can be difficult to get good

## Alpha Dressage Officers

### President

Donna Sloben  
(941) 704-8280  
[dsloben@aol.com](mailto:dsloben@aol.com)

### Vice President

Susan Schoettle  
(941) 320-3054  
[sschoettle@yahoo.com](mailto:sschoettle@yahoo.com)

### General Secretary

Sue Slaubaugh  
(941) 773-4936  
[SueSlau@hotmail.com](mailto:SueSlau@hotmail.com)

### Treasurer / Membership Secretary

Martha Koehnlein  
(941) 320-7673  
[Koeh2377@gmail.com](mailto:Koeh2377@gmail.com)

### Events Coordinator

Mandy Peterson  
[mandypeterson600@gmail.com](mailto:mandypeterson600@gmail.com)  
727-204-6863

### Members At Large

Betty Brown  
[bmb76101@verizon.net](mailto:bmb76101@verizon.net)  
941-925-1575

Ronnie DeWitt  
[rdewitt@sellingfloridanow.com](mailto:rdewitt@sellingfloridanow.com)  
941-650-2154

Robin Segó

[Sego1@juno.com](mailto:Sego1@juno.com)  
941-735-1136

### Website & Newsletter

Linda Roberts  
[lindalroberts816@gmail.com](mailto:lindalroberts816@gmail.com)  
941-773-4936

We're on the Web!  
[www.alphadressage.org](http://www.alphadressage.org)

## President's letter (cont'd)

speakers when we can only manage to get 10 people or sometimes less to a meeting. We are open to alternatives though, so if you have an idea for a different venue or a guest speaker, I'd love to hear from you!

Are you good with social media? Enjoy spending time on your computer? We are looking for someone with these skills to help us with our Facebook page, our website, and our newsletter. We as a board are woefully lacking in this area and need all the help we can get! You do not need to commit to being a board member, and you can earn your volunteer hours in your spare time by helping us get our information out into the world. Please feel free to reach out to any one of the board members if you, or someone you know, would be able to help with any or all of these tasks.

I am very excited to see what we can do this year and hope you are all willing to follow along with me, and maybe occasionally pick me up and dust me off as I charge down this new path with you!

**Here's to a happy and successful 2024!**

## Upcoming Events

**January 10, 2024:** Unwanted Gift Exchange and Party at Betty Brown's home

**January 14, 2024:** Schooling show at Triple J – Michelle Velasco DVM, USEF r, USDF L with distinction (WDAA)

**February 18, 2024:** Schooling show at Triple J - Bill Woods, USEF/USDF R

**March 10, 2024:** Musical Freestyle clinic with Melanie Michalak - Instride

**March 17, 2024:** Schooling show at Triple J – Heather Stalker, USDF/USEF R & WDAA R

**September 15, 2024:** Schooling show at Triple J - Lynn Newton , WDAA R

**October 27, 2024:** Schooling show at Triple J – Halloween Freestyle - Charlotte Trentleman, USEF S, USEF R (for Western)

**November 17, 2024:** Schooling show at Triple J – Judy Downer, USEF/USDF S & WDAA R

## January Unwanted Gift Exchange at Betty Brown's Home

The January meeting will be at Betty Brown's on Wednesday January 10th starting at 6:30. This is always a fun meeting including an unwanted gift exchange. Just bring a wrapped gift, it does not need to be expensive. It can be something you were given that you don't need or want, something funny or even something nice (we always end up with a good assortment!). There will be gift stealing, and laughter, so come join us for the fun!

The address is:  
7610 Saddle Creek Trail  
Sarasota, FL 34241  
The gate code to get into Saddle Creek is 52360.

## News from the Clinic Committee – Plans for 2024

Well, 2024 is off to a bit of a rocky start for our clinics. To err on the side of caution, Alpha and the owner of Rancho del Zorro cancelled the greatly anticipated 2-day clinic with Lauren Sprieser on Jan. 6 & 7, 2024. It was felt that a reported case of strangles in a boarding facility in North Ft Myers with an ongoing barn quarantine created too much risk for the breeding farm from this very contagious disease. Unfortunately, we are not able to reschedule with Lauren this year as her calendar is full.

### SAVE THE DATE - Musical Freestyle Clinic on March 10<sup>th</sup>

We are hosting a Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1-day freestyle clinic with Melanie Michalak, a well-known musical freestyle designer with multiple degrees in music and experience with creating freestyles at all levels in traditional and western dressage. At the 2023 USDF National Finals, her freestyle creations earned 1<sup>st</sup> Level Open Reserve Championship, I-1 Open 6<sup>th</sup> place, Grand Prix Open 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> place. At the 2023 WDAA Western Dressage World Championships, her freestyle designs won numerous top 6 awards, including freestyle World Champion 2023 (Levels 1-5).

You don't need to have a freestyle or have ridden to music before – just come with your horse and Melanie will help you find a style and type of music that you and your horse like. She works with horses and riders at all levels and loves making riding to music fun for everyone. Costs for riding with Melanie and auditing will be announced soon. She is also available to do a Q&A session on Saturday evening to be able to directly answer questions you may have. This will be a very educational and fun event so please save the date. The lovely covered arena at InStride in Venice will be the location. More information will be emailed and posted on the website and Facebook as we nail down all the details.

### MORE IN 2024

We are working on a 2-day clinic with a Florida-based judge/clinician that could combine one day in a ride-a-test format and one day in a regular clinic format or a mix of options. More information to come as this clinic develops.

Thank you for your interest in Alpha's clinics. Please let me know your ideas and concerns. We want the clinics to be interesting, informative, and fun for all Alpha members.

See you at a Clinic! Susan Schoettle

## 2024 Show Season

A graphic titled "2024 SHOW SCHEDULE" with a background of a horse's head in profile, rendered in a stylized, glowing purple and pink color. The text is white and set against a dark, gradient background. The schedule is listed in a vertical column of rounded rectangular boxes, each preceded by a small white dot.

**2024 SHOW SCHEDULE**

- JANUARY 14 MICHELLE VELASCO, ALSO WDAA
- FEBRUARY 18 BILL WOODS
- MARCH 17 HEATHER STALKER, ALSO WDAA
- SEPTEMBER 15 LYNN NEWTON, ALSO WDAA
- OCTOBER 27 CHARLOTTE TRENTLMAN, HALLOWEEN FREESTYLE+ WDAA
- NOVEMBER 17 JUDY DOWNER, ALSO WDAA

Alpha Dressage Association will be hosting 6 schooling shows this season at Triple J Ranch in Sarasota! In 2023, we were able to host 5 shows and many times had to close shows early due to the amount of interest we received. Thanks to all of our volunteers who make these shows possible and to the ADA Board Members who put a lot of work in behind the scenes to make things run smoothly.

## 2023 Annual Awards Banquet & Membership Meeting



Our Annual Awards Banquet and Membership meeting was held on December 9<sup>th</sup> at Cooper's Hawk restaurant. Pictured above are those who were present to receive their ribbons and loot. A detailed list of award winners is posted later in the newsletter.

Nancy Atkinson was awarded our Volunteer of the Year Award, so richly deserved after volunteering in the office at all our shows this year. Thank you, Nancy, for all your hard work!



Elections were also held for our 2024 Officers and Board Members. Please welcome our new and returning board members.

**President:** Donna Sloben

**Vice-President:** Susan Schoettle

**General Secretary:** Sue Slaubaugh

**Treasurer/Membership Secretary:** Martha Koehnlein

**Events Coordinator:** Mandy Peterson

**Members-At-Large**

Betty Brown

Ronnie DeWitt

Robin Segó

## Awards for 2023

Alpha Dressage Association extends their congratulations to the following horses and riders. Many hours of work and dedication went into the achievements shown below. Great job everyone!

Name	Horse	Level	Divison	Median	Place
Robin Segó	Boris of Solstice	First Level	AA	65.758	Grand Champion
Leslie Emery	Scarletts Hershez Kiss	Gaited Basic	AA	68.654	Grand Champion
Lauren Merchant	Buckeyez Southern Cazzady	Gaited Basic	OP	70.400	Grand Champion
Suzi Jennings	Aragones MOR	Intro Level	OP	71.750	Grand Champion
Natalie Beard	Wine Country Romeo	Intro Level	JR	67.750	Grand Champion
Angela Ridgway	Tagustus	Second Level	AA	60.424	Grand Champion
Suzi Jennings	Aragones MOR	Training Level	OP	68.600	Grand Champion
Robin Segó	Boris of Solstice	Training Level	AA	68.800	Grand Champion
Ronnie Dewitt	Quizaro MC	Training Level	AA	66.724	Reserve Champion
Natalie Beard	Wine Country Romeo	USEA Starter	JR	67.667	Grand Champion
Amanda Kopak	Suzi's Big Hot Rod in Heaven	WDAA Basic	AA	73.462	Grand Champion
Brenda Morrow	Mama Tried	WDAA Basic	AA	68.478	Reserve Champion
Lauren Merchant	Charismatic Cowboy	WDAA Basic	OP	68.462	Grand Champion
Brooke Adamo	Nevadas Wild Heart	WDAA Intro	JR	74.318	Grand Champion
Lauren Merchant	Charismatic Cowboy	WDAA Intro	OP	71.250	Grand Champion
Lauren Merchant	Suzi's Big Hot Rod in Heaven	WDAA Level 1	OP	70.000	Grand Champion
Mark Hiser	Dreamin Miracles	WDAA Level 1	AA	65.000	Grand Champion
Brooke Adamo	Uno	WDAA Level 1	JR	69.138	Grand Champion
Mark Hiser	Dreamin Miracles	WDAA Level 2	AA	70.200	Grand Champion
Melanie Werst	Duke	WDAA Level 2	AA	67.000	Reserve Champion

## Upcoming USEF Rules Changes

**Beginning December 1, 2025, under GR 1101.1, all horses competing in USEF-licensed or -endorsed competitions must be microchipped with a 15-digit ISO compliant 11784/11785 chip.**

For more information on microchipping, including content that was made specifically to answer a wide array of questions, please visit [www.usef.org/microchip](http://www.usef.org/microchip).

If you have specific questions about recording your microchip, please email [horseservices@usef.org](mailto:horseservices@usef.org).

IMPORTANT NOTE: ***This rule change will NOT apply to our schooling shows.*** Only those competing at recognized shows will be affected.

## Alpha Dressage Classifieds

*Note: Any member may submit a brief classified ad for free. Send your text ad (no photos to save space) to [info@alphadressage.org](mailto:info@alphadressage.org). Submission deadline is the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month to be placed in the next edition of the newsletter.*

### Looking for a Covered Arena for your ride?

InStride at 1629 Ranch Road in Nokomis is offering haul-in use of their lovely covered arena on Sundays. Get out of the sun and the rain and ride in a large covered arena. For more information, please contact: Elizabeth Ireland, [eireland@easterseals-swfl.org](mailto:eireland@easterseals-swfl.org), or JoEllen Pozarek, [jpozarek@easterseals-swfl.org](mailto:jpozarek@easterseals-swfl.org)



# Volunteer Form

**\*\* 6 hours minimum required annually to qualify for Year-End Award \*\***

**Thank You for Volunteering – We Appreciate Your Time!**

**Please check in with the Office when arriving for your volunteer time.  
You must sign in to start your time and sign out when you are finished.**

**Please print all requested information below.**

Name of ADA Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

(if different from ADA Member)

**NOTE: If you are donating your time, you must specify the ADA member name and then provide your name.**

Name of show/event attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Total hours worked: \_\_\_\_\_ Job(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to the volunteer coordinator or office on the day of the show/event  
or mail it to: Donna Sloben / 5317 Fruitville Rd./ Box 60 / Sarasota, FL 34232**

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Signature of the Volunteer Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested activities to complete the ADA requirement of 6 volunteer hours:

- Scribe
- Scorer
- Gatekeeper
- Runner
- Floater
- Arena Set-up
- Arena Change-over
- Arena Take-Down
- Volunteer on a Committee

Note: This form is also available on our website



## Alpha Dressage Association

### Membership application for 2024

Membership runs from Dec. 1, 2023– Nov. 30, 2024

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adult \_\_\_\_\_ Junior (18 & under) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth for juniors \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PREFERRED PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ANNUAL DUES

Adult: \$50.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Junior \$40.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose \$10.00 for a group subscription to HORSE & PONY \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(If wanted) TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to *Alpha Dressage Association*.

Alpha Dressage Association is a USDF Group Member Organization; its members are automatically USDF Group Members.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

GUARDIAN SIGNATURE OF JUNIOR APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

Martha Koehnlein  
490 Percheron Circle  
Nokomis, FL 34275  
941-320-7673  
[Koeh2337@gmail.com](mailto:Koeh2337@gmail.com)