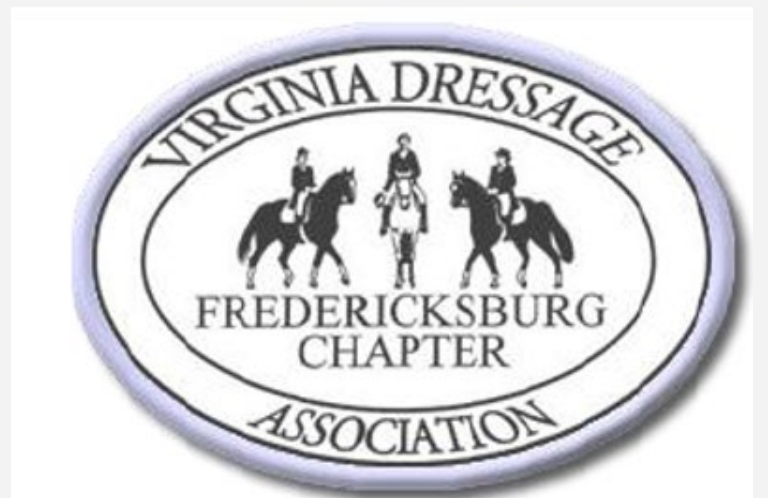


# Fredericksburg Chapter of the Virginia Dressage Association June 2023



## Collective Remarks

By Anna Fox

Why do we have such a hard time controlling the shoulders and keeping our horse's straight? Our horses are just like us, built asymmetrically. Naturally they will travel carrying their weight unevenly. Of course, then we want to add our weight on top of them along with our own asymmetry, so no wonder we have a hard time with the straightness thing.

We all know that the quickest, shortest route between any two points is a straight line, but how does this apply to our riding? Think of a line of energy up through the horse's hind legs, up over the back and neck, coming out at the poll. If this line is straight, it can be powerful. If the line deviates at any one point, a massive amount of energy is lost at that spot. As George Morris indicated in last month's closing quote--a drifting horse is a horse that is losing power and not using itself. This is why we must be obsessive about straightness and symmetry. As riders, we have to become ambidextrous and train our horses the same way. Then we have to expect the straightness and not allow for those little deviations that can cost us so much impulsion.

Generally, we hear all about "straightness" in the form of using the outside rein or riding from the inside leg to the outside rein. From all of the Facebook posts I've seen (and having been totally lost on this idea at one point myself), I see that most people don't get this concept.

That is because it is totally counterintuitive, and you have to train your brain to accept it as fact. The best way to do this (in my experience) is just to throw out all of those key phrases and fancy trainer talk. Just concentrate on the straightness. You need both reins for your horse to be straight, and your horse should push equally into both reins. So, once you find your straightness and learn to maintain your straightness in turns, circles, and all the other movements you want to perform, you'll figure out how that outside rein works. Then you will have an "a-ha" moment and your brain will forever latch onto the idea, providing an intense moment of clarity.

Of course, this was my own experience, and I had two trainers who I'm sure were blue in the face from trying to pound this into my skull over the years, but in the end, I had to take both of their philosophies and play around with them until the "a-ha" moment hit me. Regrettably, I think this was somewhere around my Third Level endeavors, maybe while I was learning Third and competing at Second. Either way, I'm pretty sure if I had figured it out a bit earlier, my riding life would have been much easier!

**"In the beginning we think it is all about controlling the hindquarters (because we must), but you really start to know you have something when you can control the shoulders."—Major Jeremy Beale**

## VADA-F Officers

President: Anna Fox

Vice President: Karen Rice

Secretary: Hannah Bowers

Treasurer: Sharon Ackley

## VADA-F Committee Chairs

Membership: Sharnette Atkinson

Awards: Angela/Gracelyn Martinez, Sharnette Atkinson

Licensed Show Manager: Sharon Ackley

Education: Megan Irby, Jamie Ramirez

Volunteer Coordinators: Tara Dean

Adult Team: Teresa Crater

Youth Team: Sarah Grady

Newsletter: Karen Rice

Sponsorship/Fundraising: Chris Balasi, Hannah Bowers

Publicity, Website: Cambray Walmer

State Reps: Anna Fox, Karen Rice

Historians: Barb Ellis, Sharon Kipping

Dear VADA-F Members,

Thank you for the grant that I used to help pay for a Masterson Method 5-day Advanced Seminar. I am on my journey for certification in the Masterson Method and have completed fieldwork block 1 (out of 3) and about to start fieldwork block 2. On Saturday May 6th, I did a presentation about what I had learned at the seminar. I had fun, and it looked like everyone in attendance had fun, too—including the horses! Feel free to reach out to me if your horse could use a session, as I am always looking for more practice and case-study horses for my certification journey. What I presented is summarized below:

What is the Masterson Method?

- An interactive method of bodywork that uses the horse to help you find and release tension in the key junctions of the body that most affect performance.
- It enables the horse to actively participate in the process of relieving tension.
- You do *with* the horse rather than *to* the horse.

How does it work?

- Horses have incredible awareness and sensitivity to outside stimuli
- We can work with this sensitivity to access the nervous system to enable the horse to release deep stress in his muscles, connective tissue, and structure.
- We do this by learning to use our touch and the horse's responses to our touch—or lack thereof—understanding small nuances in the horse's body language and staying under the bracing threshold.

What are the key junctions of the horse's body that most affect its performance?

- The Poll-Atlas junction
- The Neck-Shoulder-Withers Junction (cervical-thoracic C7-T1)
- The Hind End-Sacroiliac Junction

What levels of touch are used in the Masterson Method?

- Air Gap—no touch
- Just enough pressure to dent a/an:
  - Egg Yolk
  - Grape
  - Soft Lemon
  - Hard Lime
- LESS IS MORE!
- We use SRSR: Search, Response, Stay, Release

The Bladder Meridian

- From Chinese medicine, there are 12 primary acupuncture meridians in the body
- The Bladder Meridian is one of the major meridians and balances the other 11 meridians, so it affects the whole body
- The Bladder Meridian starts just behind the eye, all along the neck and back, down the hind leg, to the ting point on the back of the hoof

How does the horse show release of tension?

- When you find an area of tension, the horse's response can be Subtle or Larger
- Subtle Responses include blinking; twitching/quivering lips; change in breathing; sighing, letting out breath; dropping head and neck; and softening of the eye
- Larger Responses include licking and chewing; snorting; shaking head and/or body; yawning; rolling back 2<sup>nd</sup> eyelid; stretching and flexing; and fidgeting

After the presentation, members were given the opportunity to try the Bladder Meridian technique on some unfamiliar horses. Everyone was amazed at the responses they were able to elicit from the horses. The pictures below are of horses releasing tension as a result of members' efforts.



# VADA-F Business

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The Fredericksburg Dressage Chapter of the Virginia Dressage Association (VADA-F) is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization created to serve the needs of the dressage community in Fredericksburg and the surrounding area.

The VADA-F's Mission is to:

- Advance the discipline of dressage
- Promote the welfare and care of equines
- Offer and develop educational clinics and seminars
- Sponsor Adult and Youth Teams
- Sponsor an annual Licensed Show
- Support schooling shows

VADA-F is a chapter of the Virginia Dressage Association, which is a GMO of Region 1 of the United States Dressage Federation (USDF); all VADA members automatically become USDF Group Members. The 2023 membership year runs from December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2023.

## VADA-F Meeting Minutes—May 6, 2023

Attendance:

Anna Fox, Jamie Ramirez, Sharnette Atkinson, Carolyn Briggs, Karen Rice, Teagan Niles, Rachel Edwards, Sharon Ackley, Chris Balasi, Hannah Bowers

Meeting Start: 12:41 pm

Membership: 26 individual, 11 youth, 3 youth affiliate, 7 affiliate, total = 47 members

Jamie – scheduling Bruno June 17th, Willow Brooke equestrian, Ashland, 13365 Farrington Road, outdoor, no rain date currently. Day fee \$1400 and arena fee \$400. 8 rides. (\$225 a ride). If we apply for a grant, we could charge members \$100 and \$150 nonmembers. Advertising is going out soon! Clinic will be on Strider.

Survey for Dressage at Devon will be coming out. Vans seem to be very expensive so another option could be carpooling and having everyone meet there. If you are interested in going, please respond to the survey!

Youth Team – Three teams total, motion made to fund all three.

Discussions made to update the handbook by the end of the year.

Rose Mount – Still need a farrier, discussion about getting a trailer instead of using a storage unit, discussion about charging more for opportunity classes and bumping some other costs up by \$5.

Meeting adjourned: 1:43pm

## End VADA-F Meeting Minutes

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## VADA Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2023

**Participating:** Sheli King (VN); Alison Douglas (Central); Robyn Nunally (SVDA); Angie Stanaway (NE); Muffin Smith (SWVADA); Nancy Doody (C'ville); Laura Nelson (SWVADA); Anne Draine (NEVADA); Kathleen Kelly (SWVADA); Karen Rice (Fred); Diann Carpenter (NOVA) and members Rachel Rice, Lisa Beckwith, and Diane Boyd

**Minutes:** Laura Nelson made the motion and Anne Draine seconded that we approve the March minutes, and everyone concurred.

**Treasurer's Report:** Via email Jessie reported that our combined balance is \$179,650.

**Report on By-Laws for membership type:** Sheli reported that the bylaws reference senior and junior membership categories. They then go on to say that individual chapters can create additional membership categories. As most chapters are already using the term "affiliated" or "affiliate", we request all chapters adopt that same terminology.

**2024 GAIG:** Sheli announced that we have been granted the 2024 GAIG. The dates will be October 10th thru 13th.

**2024 Purple Book:** We are forming a committee to brainstorm how to put together the online format, talk about security, etc. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact Sheli. As with any committee, this counts towards volunteer hours. Diann Carpenter and Nancy Doody have already volunteered.

**2024 Clinic:** This is another opportunity for members to join a committee and earn volunteer hours. Those interested should contact Sheli. The first order of business is to establish a date and a facility. Nancy Doody and Denise Lennon have already volunteered to be on the committee.

**DAL Update:** Dates are July 14-16. Dianne Boyd reported that we have secured a photographer. Peta Jean Wylie will once again be sponsoring the Maestro Cup and we are looking for other SHAC, Challenge, and high score sponsors. Awards will be set up outside. The competitor's party will be on the mezzanine. Nancy Doody is asking chapters to support the shows with the combined chapter sponsorship package. The deadline for DAL is June 12th. Sign up is online and is \$200. Vendors are slowly signing up. Dianne also mentioned that she cleaned up the individual chapter logos and Nancy Doody emailed to the chapter presidents and newsletter editors.

**GAIG Update:** Dates are Oct 5-8. Dianne reported that Friday night will be the competitor party and Saturday night will be the doggy costume contest. Another reminder that this is parents weekend and hotel rooms are already almost fully booked.

**AOB:** Laura Nelson asked if the board was going to consider increasing the chapter grant funds as we are not having the chapter challenge this year. Sheli will talk to Tina and the executive board will have a meeting shortly.

**Chapter Updates:** PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE SENDING INFO TO NANCY DOODY FOR THE WEBSITE

**Central-** Dressage at the Meadow- two one day licensed shows April 29-30th.

**Charlottesville-** They are having a Michael Bragdell Clinic at Afton Stables April 26-27.

**Fredericksburg** – They are having a clinic with Bruno Greber on June 17th. The location is still tbd. They are also working on putting together a clinic with Jane Kelly in August. They are planning to send 2-3 teams to the Jr/Yr team competition.

**NEVADA** – They are having a fix a test clinic on June 4th with Nancy Lowey at Edgehill Farm. On May 14th, they are having an open show that is also 4-H state qualifier.

**NOVA** – May 17th is a midweek licensed show. June 10-11 is their Summer Dressage Festival. July 26-29 is their Dressage Camp. They have a schooling show August 5th. They also have an updated logo.

**ShenVADA** –

**SVDA-** Schooling shows- May 21, June 18, July 9, July 30, Aug 27, Sept 24 and Oct 29. They are also having a low cost clinic with Kate Knick at Silverleaf on May 6th.

**Southwest-** They are having a clinic August 12-13 at VA Tech with Stacy Pattison. They are also having schooling shows June 4th and October 15th at Green Hill Park.

**NEXT MEETING** May 23rd at 8pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Douglas

## VADA Meeting Minutes – May 25, 2023

**Participating:** Sheli King (VN); Alison Douglas (Central); Robyn Nunally (SVDA); Angie Stanaway (NE); Muffin Smith (SWVADA); Nancy Doody (C'ville); Anne Draine (NEVADA); Diann Carpenter (NOVA); Alex Jeffers (Central); Jessie Ginsburg (NOVA); Sandy Toby (SVDA); Tina Longaker (C'ville); Nancy Lowey (C'ville); Sandy Monolo (NE); Anna Simmons (F'burg) and members Rachel Rice, Lisa Beckwith, and Diane Boyd

**Minutes:** The May minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jessie reported that our combined balance is \$177K without much activity.

**Membership Report:** Via email to Sheli, Beth reported that we have 451 members with USDF but we have an additional 43 that USDF hasn't yet posted.

**Chapter Grant Increase:** The board approved via email vote, after the last meeting, to increase for this year, the amounts awarded for each membership division by \$400. This increase will be re-evaluated annually. The process will be two-fold: the first payment will be with the submission and the additional \$400 will be paid when the required article is submitted. The board also discussed making this an online process which we'll work on with Nancy Doody. As a reminder, the base payment tiers are 1-99 members \$700, 100-199 members \$900 and over 200 members \$1000. The \$400 for this year is in addition to those numbers.

**2024 Purple Book:** We are forming a committee to brainstorm how to put together the online format, talk about security, etc. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact Sheli. As with any committee, this counts towards volunteer hours. The members who have joined so far are Tina, Nancy Doody, Diann, Robin Dannels, and possibly Anne Harrington.

**2024 Clinic:** This is another opportunity for members to join a committee and earn volunteer hours. Those interested should contact Sheli. Renee O'Leary approached Sheli about the possibility of partnering for a Sabine Shut-Kery clinic at her farm off I-64 at Zion Crossroads. The board discussed and approved pursuing this approach. Her farm has plenty of room for auditors and there is also a hotel at the exit. She would contact Sabine Schut-Kery's personnel for available dates.

**DAL Update:** Dates are July 14-16. Dianne Boyd reported that the prize list is now available, and the opening date is June 5<sup>th</sup>. Nancy Doody reported that there are still a couple of chapters that have not signed up for the combined chapter sponsorship package. She also mentioned that with the sponsorship comes a full-page ad so chapters that have sent in their sponsorships, please email her what you'd like on the ad space. The deadline for the remaining chapters is June 12<sup>th</sup>. Sign up is online and is \$200. We are still in need of more individual sponsors for the Challenge classes.

**GAIG Update:** Dates are Oct 5-8. Another reminder that this is parents weekend and hotel rooms are already almost fully booked.

**AOB: Sheli** brought up the possibility of a new venue in Hanover for the year end awards banquet. The committee will meet in the near future to discuss. Lisa Powers reported that the USDF Region 1 Jr Teams Challenge currently has 23 registered teams with 70 riders, of which 45 are from VA. Registration closes June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Some teams are still looking for an additional member to fill the team so individual riders are welcome. Sponsorship, vendors and advertisers are needed to help support the show, as are volunteers.

**Chapter Updates: PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE SENDING INFO TO NANCY DOODY FOR THE WEBSITE**

**Central-** July 29-30 clinic with Emily Donaldson at Chestnut Oaks, Oct 21-22 clinic with Nicole DelGiorno at Old Raptor Farm

**Charlottesville-** July 9 clinic with Lisa El-Ramey at Old Raptor Farm

**Fredericksburg** – June 17 clinic with Bruno Greber at Willow Brooke Equestrian Center. They are also working on putting together a clinic with Jane Kelly in August. They are planning to send 2-3 teams to the Jr/Yr team competition.

**NEVADA** – June 4 clinic with Nancy Lowey at Edgehill Farm. Sept 16<sup>th</sup> clinic with Nikki Vogel at Edgehill Farm.

**NOVA** – June 10-11 is their Summer Dressage Festival. July 26-29 is their Dressage Camp at Frying Pan Park with Jim Koford and Debbie Rodriguez. Aug 5 schooling show at Morven Aug 26-27 two one day licensed shows.

**ShenVADA** –

**SVDA-** Schooling shows- June 18, July 9, July 30, Aug 27, Sept 24 and Oct 29.

**Southwest-** June 4 schooling show at Green Hill Park August 12-13 clinic at VA Tech with Stacy Pattison. October 15 schooling show at Green Hill Park.

**NEXT MEETING** June 29th AT 8pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Douglas

## End VADA Meeting Minutes

## Upcoming Events:

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### June

13, **VADA-F** meeting

17-18, ~~VADA-CH, Isabel De Szinay Dressage, Culpeper—CANCELLED~~

17, **VADA-F** clinic with Bruno Greber--**FULL**

21, CDCTA Dressage at Great Meadow, The Plains

25-26, Youth Competition, Culpeper, Lehigh Valley Dressage Association (<https://www.lvda.org/youth-dressage-team-challenge>)

### July

14-16, VADA Dressage at Lexington

### August

12, VADA-CH schooling show, Grayson Farm, Scottsville

23-24, ERAHC Virginia Classic Dressage I and II, Lexington

### September

9-10, **VADA-F** Dressage at Rose Mount I and II, Spotsylvania

### October

5-8, USDF Region 1 GAIGs, Lexington





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