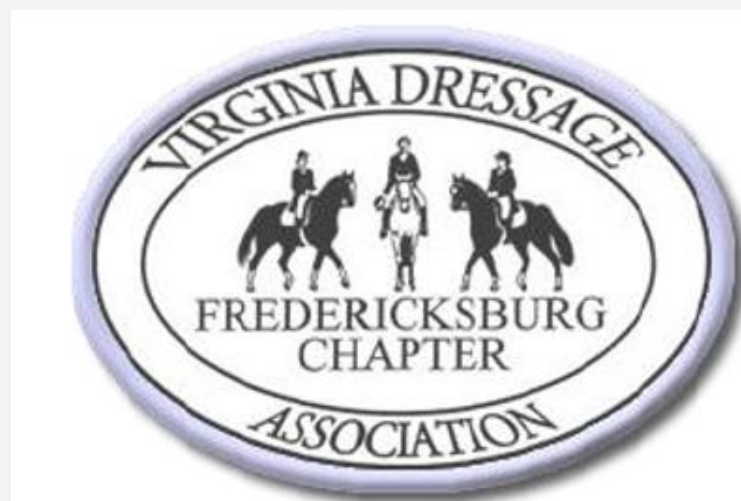


Fredericksburg Chapter of the Virginia Dressage Association

May 2023



Collective Remarks

By Anna Fox

Horse Show, Like A Natural

Competitions are stressful. Even if you've been to lots of competitions, they still mean a change in your normal routine, and that of your horse. If you aren't an experienced horse shower, there is also the added stress of feeling alone, surrounded by a bunch of people who compete all the time. Then, there are those of us who like to keep things as natural as possible for our horses. Can you even go to a horse show if you think outside the sandbox? Of course!

So, how do you overcome all of that pressure and still have a successful go in the arena? As long as you've prepared your horse (and yourself) for the stress a horse show might impose, you just have to trust your relationship. I see people all of the time who have great relationships with their horses and good working biomechanics but are terrified to compete. Trust yourself and your horse.

No one should compete if it isn't something that they really want to do, and competition isn't a gauge of how good your horsemanship is. To me, horse shows are about working toward mastering a certain set of skills. You must also remember that judging is always subjective, even with objective criteria, so make your own horse show goals. Set goals that are independent of scores and/or placings.

Do what you do, but know the rules. Depending on the type of competition that you want to attend, there may be things like required pieces of tack or ground schooling techniques that are not allowed. Learn about these well in advance, when you decide competing might be in your goal set. This way you can prepare your horse by incorporating new things into your training regime or modifying training techniques. Practice with these new tools and teach your horse how to relax with them.

Start small, but use a big mindset. Local shows or schooling shows are some of the best ways to get you and your horse acclimated to a show ground. Ask around your local area to find out which shows are

recommended for newbies. Even if you just trailer in to the show ground and let your horse walk around. Plan the experience just like you'd be getting on, warming up, and going into the show ring. When our minds are under stress, our bodies revert to muscle memory. Train your body to take over if your brain checks out. Ditto this for your horse. Create a rhythm you can rely on.

The stabling conundrum. Depending on what type of competition and what level; you may need, or have the option to, stable your horse on site. If your horse isn't used to being stalled, this is likely to create some undue pressure. You can only go to competitions where you don't need to stable your horse, but if you choose to use horse-show stabling, teach your horse beforehand. Get them acquainted to being in a stall, just like you do the trailer. Listen to your horse at the competition, you may have to do a lot of approach, retreat, hand walking, and hacking. Whatever your horse needs. If you know overnight stabling is in your future and your horse isn't used to being stalled, try a show where you can get a "day" stall first. You might need to do this several times. Make sure your horse is comfortable.

Ignore the peer pressure. Some people will judge you for being new, or doing something different, or having a different breed of horse. Other people will remember what their first times were like and want to help. Accept help if you want, politely decline if you don't, and just keep your head up around the judges. Let your experience speak for itself.

Lastly, don't be afraid to get help! If you don't know an experienced competition trainer that can give you good advice, take yourself to some shows. Spectate, or better yet, volunteer. This is a great way to get a feel for shows and to notice any people you might be able to connect with for support. There is comfort in having a buddy.

“Borrow money from pessimists—they don't expect it back.”—Steven Wright

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

Member Column

The club sends their condolences to long-time member Barb Ellis on the loss of her beloved horse Stirling, who passed away at the ripe age of 28.

We also send well wishes to long-time member Sharon Kipping as she heals from a knee replacement.

VADA-F History

As with any organization, needs change, and the Commonwealth Dressage and combined Training Association evolved out of the VADA/NOVA Chapter, giving Virginia its first organization concerned with Combined Training. The CDCTA and VADA have gone on to jointly sponsor many of the USEF/USDF programs. An increase in active membership in the Charlottesville area in 1989-1990 lead to the inception of that Chapter from another chapter in late 1990. The Shenandoah Chapter

(ShenVADA) was established in 1999 to serve the growing population in the Valley and finally in 2001, the North East Chapter (NEVADA) in the West Point/Gloucester area to make our seventh and eighth chapters.

Over the years, the VADA alone or through its Chapters has hosted many prestigious dressage shows: USEF, ABIG & GAIG, and CBLM finals; Qualifiers for Olympics, Pan American Games, Volvo World Cup and the North American Young Riders Championships to name a few. The VADA is the only organization to ever host a USEF & CBLM Finals at the same show (Lexington Horse Center, 1993). It was one of the largest shows ever held on the East Coast with 1300 riders in four days, with no night classes and only six arenas. Though it was successful, this format has been discontinued, as it lessened both of the individual finals. The VADA was the primary supplier of volunteers for the North American Junior Young Rider Championships themselves (2005-2007).

2012 saw the beginning of what has become a yearly challenge, the Chapter Challenge Schooling Show. Each year this highly contested show moves around our state, giving riders from all over the chance to compete for their Chapter in a Team event. Our Chapters compete both in the arena and in what prizes they provide for the winners.

In 2016, the VADA entered into negotiations to purchase the purchase the iconic Dressage at Lexington. Starting in 2017, the VADA took over the management of DAL and is looking forward to many years of hosting this competition for the riders in the area.

The VADA has also been the sponsoring organization for many USEF and USDF Educational programs: judges forums, L, r: and R programs, and Rider certification to name just a few. VADA will continue to offer these and many other educational programs to its membership.

As much as VADA has to offer you, you must realize that YOU have much to offer your organization in return. Membership participation is NOT just volunteering your time (and back!) at shows and clinics, it's also feedback to your Chapter and then up to the VADA Board. The VADA Board is a dynamic group, but if they don't hear from you, your wonderful ideas will never crystallize into those creative activities.

VADA-F Business

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—April 11, 2023

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Attendance:

Anna Fox, Heather and Lottie Crawford, Michelle and Anna Shores, Cambray Walmer, Abigail and Isla Bromilow, Teresa Crater, Jamie Ramirez, Sarah Grady, Sharnette Atkinson, Carolyn Briggs, Natalie Bestafka, Karen Rice, Tara Dean, Diane Nathan

Meeting Start: 7:02 pm

Notes:

Membership: 26 individual, 11 youth, 3 youth affiliate, 5 affiliate, total = 45 members

The Freestyle change of awards for achievement awards was voted on and passed. These changes can be found below after the meeting minutes.

Clinic survey: The clinicians most chosen were Bruno Greber, Jane Kelly then Debbie Bowman, Lise El Ramey. VADAF is already working on some chosen dates for Jane Kelly. VADAF will send out another survey for location and finalizing dates on a few of these clinicians.

Jamie's Grant presentation – May 6th at Wingreen in Orange at 11am. This would be a meeting as well at the presentation.

Rose Mount thoughts – Sponsorships! If you or someone else you know may be interested in sponsoring this year's show the sponsorship forms can be found at vadaf.org.

Educational Club Activity – VADAF is working on a fun trip for its members to Devon, Sept 26th – Oct 1st. A survey will be coming out, please respond if you are interested in going. More details to come but a number of who will be interested in going is the first step, stay on the lookout for the survey!

VADAF Achievement Awards:

1. Same Rider and Horse combination must achieve four (4) scores from at least two (2) separate schooling and/or recognized shows.
2. Riders must have scores validated with VADAF Show Validation Form -OR- copies of qualifying test -OR- USDF score printout.
3. Awards are based solely on scores collected over time and need not be earned in one year.
4. Each award recipient will receive a Certificate of Achievement, Medal, and special award.
5. All scores submitted must have been obtained while the rider was a VADAF Member in good standing.

Meeting adjourned: 7:46pm

End VADA-F Meeting Minutes

VADA Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2023

Minutes Not Received

End VADA Meeting Minutes



Upcoming Events:

May

6 **VADA-F** meeting, 11:00 a.m., Win Green
18-21, Mid-Atlantic Dressage Festival, Lexington

June

13, **VADA-F** meeting
17-18, ~~VADA-CH, Isabel De Szinay Dressage, Culpeper--CANCELLED~~
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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