

## USDF Board of Governors (BOG) General Assembly

December 6, 2024 – Houston, TX

### ***DRAFT MINUTES – PENDING 2025 BOG APPROVAL***

The meeting was called to order at 1:26 p.m. CST on Friday, December 6, 2024.

#### **Delegate roll call** – Debra Reinhardt, Secretary

A quorum was reached.

#### **Delegate orientation**

- *Anyone can speak at the microphone during discussion or Q&A.*
- *State your name and region when you are speaking to the BOG.*
- *If you make a motion, it must be submitted in writing to the USDF Secretary.*

#### **Approval of agenda – George Williams, President**

Paul Cormier moved and Sally Davenport seconded **to accept the agenda with the following amendments: Kevin Reinig will do the Audit Committee report and add to the agenda the Nominating Committee report before the presentations by candidates for USDF President and Treasurer.** Motion carried.

#### **Approval of 2023 BOG minutes – Debra Reinhardt, Secretary**

Robert Higgins moved and Ken Levy seconded **to approve the minutes of the 2023 Board of Governors meeting.** Motion carried.

#### **President's report – George Williams**

##### **Welcome to Houston:**

As most of you hopefully know, in the weeks prior to the convention the USDF committees held “pre-convention” Zoom meetings. The first part of each meeting was closed while the second part was open to anyone who wanted to learn about the committee work, ask questions or bring forward suggestions. Attendance varied by committee, but one individual had perfect attendance, attending every one of the committee meetings. I’d like to recognize Rebecca Harris from Region 7 for her outstanding dedication. Rebecca if you are here, please stand. Thank you.

##### **Membership numbers:**

I don’t plan to go into all of the details. I believe the USDF is relatively strong. While membership numbers haven’t grown as we might have hoped, they also haven’t really changed significantly over the last five years. With the growing cost of owning horses, fewer and fewer boarding stables, the lack of availability or access to entry level riding schools in most parts of the country, with the declining number of youths participating in all sports in general, and a whole host of other challenges, it is a difficult time to grow membership. In fact, the Department of Health and Human Services finds many barriers keep kids from playing sports. At the top of their list are many that will sound familiar to the equestrian community:

- Lack of access to facilities or programs
- Cost
- Social pressure
- Time constraints
- Lack of interest or knowledge

We are not alone; other countries are experiencing similar issues. That doesn’t mean we should give up. Dressage is a great sport; horses give us a lot and teach us a lot.

##### **The other Challenge we face - welfare and well-being:**

The Paris Olympics brought a lot of attention to dressage. On the plus side Snoop Dogg, and Martha Stewart put a very positive spotlight on dressage. The overall quality of the top combinations was extremely impressive, perhaps the best ever and, of course, a venue to die for! The highlight for us was our US Para Dressage Team and their slew of medals, including the team gold!

Unfortunately, on the negative side, dressage came under extreme scrutiny and pressure during the Olympics as well. That scrutiny is not going to end anytime soon, especially as we prepare for LA. Horse welfare and wellbeing must be on everyone's mind nowadays. We have to work together to make sure as a sport we deserve the so called "social license to operate". We have to look inward as well as outward. While we may never change the opinions of the diehard group opposed to horses being used for sport, there is a much, much larger group of "undecideds" with whom we have the possibility of making a good impression of dressage, and equestrian sport, in general. I recommend that we conduct ourselves, and most importantly live our lives, in a manner that leaves them with a positive impression.

I want to bring your attention to just a few of the things that the USDF has been up to lately:

**The Dressage Foundation (TDF) initiative:**

Being on the board of TDF, the one thing I learned that surprised me the most is that when USDF asks TDF for financial support for educational programs such as the USDF FEI Youth Clinics and the Young Rider Graduate Program, TDF does not have a general fund from which it draws the money. My first thought was, with such a strong history of working together to promote dressage, we need to look at how we can rectify this. After all, we share the same founder. Sure, like siblings we had our moments when we were young, but now that we're 51 and 35 we work well together.

I'm happy to report that TDF Board and the USDF Executive Board (EB) have recently approved the creation of a USDF fund within TDF. It's working title is the USDF Education Programs Support Fund. It may sound odd that some people will want to give to TDF while others may prefer to give directly to USDF. I believe this gives us the best of both worlds.

**USDF affiliate for para dressage:**

As I mentioned last year in my address to the BOG, we formed a ten member Para Dressage Structural/Implementation Task Force to review and provide recommendations to best determine the transitioning of USDF becoming the USEF recognized affiliate for para dressage. The task force met numerous times during the first half of 2024. Their recommendations were put forward to the EB and the EB ultimately approved the document that was sent to the delegates under my signature on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. The USEF has approved the recognized affiliate change for para dressage from USPEA to USDF.

The USDF has put forward our appointees to the next USEF Para Equestrian Sport Committee. In addition, we have named ten outstanding individuals to the newly formed USDF Para Dressage Committee. To date, we have nine people who have accepted and are looking forward to helping advance para dressage on the local, regional and national level. The final step is for you, the BOG, to approve the following motion:

***Motion: For USDF to become the official para dressage affiliate to the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) and fulfill associated roles and duties as such.***

Lisa Gorretta moved and Fie Anderson seconded **to approve the USDF to become the official para dressage affiliate to the USEF and fulfill associated roles and duties as such.** Motion carried.

Now that it is approved there will be one minor bylaw change request that will be part of the Bylaws Committee report. Thank you, and a huge thank you to all of the task force members for their work on this project!

**Emphasis on education:**

When I chose to put my name in for one last stint as president of USDF it was primarily to focus on the importance of education and USDF's ability to provide education on many levels. I'm happy to report that USDF's education department has grown over the last three years. We now have a staff of six dedicated to education. This includes the education of licensed officials. The highlight is the Judging Education Initiative which was launched early this year.

The longer-term project has been the reimagining of the Instructor Certification Program. We started this about six years ago with initial surveys targeting "general membership", certified instructors, and 18–25-year-olds for feedback on their experiences and impressions with the USDF Instructor Certification Program. This was followed by the creation of a task force, which in turn put forward recommendations on how we could improve what I would call a USDF flagship program. Unfortunately, COVID delayed our ability to implement many of the recommendations. However, in 2023 we were able to run a pilot program in Utah. In 2024, three more programs were held, one in Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Connecticut. Hopefully by now, many of you have heard of the recently launched Professional Development Program. I know, it's a slightly confusing name, which we're working on clarifying, because it includes an excellent educational session that is open to all members, amateur and professional.

The USDF is continually working on providing more online education content with the recommended goal of creating online educational courses.

Lastly, the USDF has been working with the USEF to be able to provide our faculty, staff and FEI level certified instructors access to a fantastic multi-sport coaching program put on by the US Center for Coaching Excellence. So far, it has been well received by all of the individuals who have attended the program.

**Final comments:**

I'm almost done! I have served on the USDF EB for twenty of the last twenty-four years. The first eight years as vice president and a total of twelve as president. The journey started innocuously enough. Natalie Lamping asked me if I would be willing to chair a small council, the USDF Competitors Council. That was about 36 years ago. The time has gone by more quickly than I'd like. All of it has been fun and rewarding. I want to thank all of you on the EB. You have been a terrific group to work with. I believe we have accomplished a lot, weathered a few storms, but it hasn't been boring. USDF is a unique institution. Its success is equally dependent on volunteers and paid staff. I owe a huge thank you to both the many volunteers and the dedicated staff. You've made my job relatively easy, which is why I could stick with it for so long. I'm going to miss working with all of you!

Standing ovation ending his report.

**Executive Director's report – Stephan Hienzsch**

Thanks to George Williams for his expertise and leadership as president for twelve of Stephan's twenty-two years with USDF.

Thanks to the delegates for their volunteer contributions to USDF and the sport. Explained that USDF is volunteer driven and staff supports the direction set by the volunteer leadership.

Thanks to USDF staff.

The 2025 Adequan®/USDF Annual Convention will be at the Lexington Hyatt Regency December 3 – 6, 2025. The 2026 convention location has not yet been determined pending further evaluation.

### **US Dressage Finals 2025:**

The US Dressage Finals will be moving in 2025. A contract with the World Equestrian Center (WEC) in Wilmington, OH has been signed for the dates of October 30 - November 2. This is one week earlier than the historical US Dressage Finals dates. The last allowed date for a regional championship to be held in 2025 is the first weekend in October, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, which is also one week earlier than in the past. This allows for enough time between the last potential regional championship qualifier and the Finals.

The decision to relocate the US Dressage Finals to the WEC in Ohio was based on consistent competitor feedback over the years related to the unpredictable nature of the November weather in Kentucky and the WEC facility's overall offerings of climate-controlled arenas, stabling, dining, and lodging. A potential move to a more westerly location is a separate issue determined based on the BOG motion approved in 2015, which requires the four USDF regional directors of western regions to come forth with a proposed venue site and dates that the four regions agree are appropriate to host the Finals. This motion was passed following the proposal presented by the site selection committee to move the event to Thermal, CA being voted down by the BOG. Since that time, the four western regional directors have met regularly, most recently in 2022.

Some considerations that must be considered when identifying a proposed and appropriate venue include competition date availability within the narrow window following the regional championship qualifying period, reasonable winter weather related travel conduciveness, and venue accessibility. Additionally, potential venues should offer adequate consistent rings with quality consistent footing, climate reliability in November, potential to create a 'national championship' level experience, and financial viability. Once a recommendation is put forward by the western regions with these considerations in mind, a feasibility evaluation by the US Dressage Finals Organizing Committee would be prompted. Until that occurs, the move to WEC Ohio afforded the best option to address the primary competitor concern and provide an equivalency of experience for both competitors and attendees

### **Educational activities:**

In 2024, USDF hosted or supported 124 live or virtual education opportunities and provided 46 online learning modules.

Throughout the year, we have been working with BlackHorseOne during all judge's clinics and we are moving forward with the final implementation stages of the Judge Education Initiative.

During this convention, the membership will be introduced to the BlackHorseOne technology already used in judge training and education. Web based education utilizing the technology is being developed and will provide new learning opportunities for members in 2025.

The 2025 Adequan®/USDF FEI-Level Trainers Conference will be held January 20-21, in Loxahatchee, FL at High Meadow Farm. The presenters are USEF Dressage Chef d' équipe Christine Traurig and Monica Theodorescu, Germany's dressage team trainer.

Plans are being finalized for the Young Rider Graduate Program. The program will be held January 18-19, in West Palm Beach, FL with twenty-five attendees. Eighteen prominent speakers have committed to contribute their expertise on a wide range.

### **Treasurer's report – Lorraine Musselman**

Lorraine thanked Stephan, Connie and the entire USDF staff for their diligence and hard work during this past year. They did and are doing an amazing job of supporting both our members and the EB as the USDF continues to expand and move forward into the future.

Page 2: Statements of Financial Position:

The Statement of Financial Position is basically a balance sheet. It is a “snapshot” of where we were on the last day of the fiscal year. This is a comparative statement which shows the balances as of March 31, 2024 and March 31, 2023.

Page 3: Assets:

The Statement of Financial Position – Assets

Total Current Assets (assets expected to be converted to cash within a year) show a slight increase of 5% for the 2024 year end as compared to the 2023 year end. While operating cash decreased close to 25%, the remainder of the current asset accounts show accounts receivable had a significant increase and investments had a moderate increase, while inventory and prepaid expenses showed slight increases.

Capital (or Fixed) Assets are down slightly, mostly due to depreciation expense.

Page 4: Liabilities and net assets:

The liabilities side of the Statement of Financial Position shows our liabilities are slightly up across the board with the exception of accounts payable, which is down slightly. The USDF does not have any long-term liabilities. Current liabilities are those that will come due in one year or less. Long term would be over one year (an example would be a mortgage).

The net assets are a net of the total assets minus the total liabilities. They are up just under 3.5% from the prior year.

Page 5: Statement of Activities (title page):

The Statement of Activities is a breakdown of revenues and expenses by program area and whether any are donor restricted. The Statement of Activities covers the full fiscal year, not just the last day. (Hence, it is “over time”). The USDF does not have any donor restricted items.

Page 6: Revenues:

This is a breakdown of the revenues of the organization by functional area. Total Revenue is \$5,924,773 this year.

Membership dues account for just under 42% of the revenues at \$2,462,267. Competition areas (competition, regional championships, and the US Dressage Finals) combined (\$1,691,769) make up just under 29%. Program services, publications, regional revenues follow behind those amounts coming in at \$268,684, \$224,737, and \$180,459, respectively.

Page 7: Expenses:

This is a breakdown of expenses of the organization by functional areas. Total Expenses for this year are \$5,541,334. Program services expenses make up two-thirds of our expenses and supporting services (general administrative) make up one-third.

As you can see, the largest portion of our program services expenses goes to the competition area at 44%, (competition also makes up the second largest area of revenues for the organization). Other significant program expenses are programs and education at 21%, publications at 14%, and member services at 12% of program services expenses. These amounts fall pretty much in line with last year’s numbers.

Page 8: Statement of Functional Expenses:

The Statement of Functional Expenses is a breakdown of expenses by type versus program area. It also covers the full fiscal year.

Page 9:

This organization is mostly personnel driven, so naturally compensation and related expenses make up the largest portion of total expenses. Most of this is related to program areas that are for the benefit of the

membership. Advertising and sponsors, prizes and awards, and programs and events follow all between 8% and 10%.

Page 10: Days Cash Reserve:

The Days Cash Reserve indicator is the calculation used to determine roughly how many days of expenses you can cover with the cash on hand without adding any income over those days. The common goal for non-profits is three to six months.

Page 11: We ended the year at 103 days (just under three and a half months) versus 149 days for the previous year. The decrease is due to the drop in cash level at year end.

Page 12: Liquidity:

The Liquidity ratio is used to determine how financially stable the organization is based on its current assets over its current liabilities. You always want this ratio to be a minimum of 1 to 1.

Page 13: Since the USDF does not carry many liabilities, this ratio is 30.97 for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, compared to 29.83 for the year ended March 31, 2023. This indicates USDF is fully capable of meeting its financial obligations.

Page 14: Revenue Breakdown:

This is a graphic representation showing you the information from the Statement of Activities – Revenues. This is by area of service.

Page 15: You can see our organization is highly reliant on membership dues to keep our programs going. Competition areas (US Dressage Finals, regional championships and competitions) make up the second most significant portion of our revenues.

Page 16: Expense Breakdown (title page):

This is a graphic representation of the Statement of Activities – Program Expenses.

Page 17: This shows what program areas comprise most of our expenses. Competition services make up the highest portion of our expenses (44%). This follows along since that is also the second largest revenue area for the organization. Following that, programs and education make up 21%, marketing, publications and merchandise 14% and membership services 12%.

Page 18: Investments (title page):

This is a comparison of the fair market value of our investments at year end for the past five years.

Page 19:

The total balance in investments on March 31, 2024 was \$8,028,361, up from 7,252,348 in March 2023. It is important to remember that this is a snapshot of their value at the end of the year. The important thing to notice is the average over the five-year period, which is currently positive. That said, no one has a crystal ball and knows exactly what the investments market will do.

The funds are broken down into four main funds: the Operating fund, the National Endowment fund, the Ruth Arvanette Grant fund, and the US Dressage Finals fund.

### **Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget – Lorraine Musselman, Treasurer**

This budget is based on normal levels of operation. It considers inflationary trends and programs that have been expanded or added. Staffing will be increased minimally in order to deliver the additional services to our members that have been added.

The revenue side of the budget includes the fee increases approved by the EB and the dues increases approved by the BOG last year. This will be the first budget where the full impact of those increases is taken into consideration.

The annual convention will be in Lexington next December. These are the projected revenues and costs associated with that location.

Championships and competition services have been adjusted based on actual trends. Expenses have been adjusted for projected increases in costs.

The education budget reflects a slight increase in both revenues and expenses over the past budget based on actual costs and expenses. It also includes the sport horse prospect forum to be held in 2025.

The general administration budget reflects the increases we have seen in costs in several areas including the increase in credit card fees, computer systems administration, utility costs, Safe Sport and related area insurance increases.

The membership budget reflects fees/dues increases and current trends.

The merchandise budget reflects fee increases and current trends.

Publications reflects a slight decrease in projected advertising revenues and an increase in expenses related to production, printing and mailing of *USDF Connection* and the *Member Guide*.

US Dressage Finals are based on expected trends for the coming year and estimated costs for the new location at WEC in Ohio.

Youth programs include the North American Youth Championship (NAYC) sponsorship and nine clinics being held. It does not include the Young Rider Graduate Program as this is held every other year.

The investments line item has been adjusted to reflect the current trends in the market, although it does not have an effect on the budget since it is pulled out at the bottom in the depreciation/amortization line item.

**Budget to Actual Comparison pages:**

These are included as requested at last year's BOG meeting. This gives you a picture of the budget trend, including last fiscal year (actual and budget), current fiscal year budget, and proposed fiscal year budget.

Revenues were below budget for most line items except for championship programs, competitions, and investments. Revenues came in ahead of budget as a total only because of the performance of our investments.

Expenses were also below budget except for the annual convention and merchandise.

When you take the investment line item out of the equation, you see the organization spent \$188,758 more than it took in. This points to the timeliness of the increases in dues/fees approved last year.

**USEF High Performance report – Laura Roberts on behalf of David O'Connor, Chief of Sport**

GR838 – Unethical treatment of the horse, new rule

- Expands the jurisdiction of USEF relating to unethical treatment of the horse
- Effective December 1, 2024
- See something, say something
- USEF anonymous texting system 2USEF (28733)

US Equestrian Open of Dressage

- Launched in 2024
- Includes the three Olympic disciplines: dressage, eventing, and jumping

- Focusing on growth in fans and followers, increased viewership across ESPN and the USEF Network
- Important contributor to high-level competition opportunities in the US
- \$250,000 prize money for Dressage Final
- Final to be hosted in Thermal, CA the end of 2025

#### Para Dressage in Paris

- Team gold, four individual gold medals, one individual silver medal

#### 2024: Year in Review

##### Nations Cup & European Opportunities

- FEI World Cup Final – Riyadh, KSA
- FEI World Breeding Championships
- Senior Nations Cup Events
  - Wellington CDIO3\* and CDIO-U25
  - Rotterdam CDIO4\*
  - Aachen CDIO5\*
- European Young Rider Tour
  - Hagen CDIO-Y
- European U25 Tour
  - Individual competition planning for U25 athletes

#### 2024 FEI NAYC

- Traverse City, MI (USA)
- Four countries
- Fifty-nine dressage competitors overall
- Five U25, twenty-five Young Riders, twenty-nine Juniors
- 2025 Inaugural Children’s Championship

#### 2024 US Dressage Festival of Champions

- Fourteen National Championships including the Para Dressage National Championship
- Returning to Lamplight Equestrian Center for 2025-2027

#### 2024 Paris Olympic Games

- Sent a very young team with riders who had fairly new mounts
- Team’s site is on 2028 Olympic Games with detailed timeline to prepare

#### Looking forward – The path to 2028:

- 2025: Strong European tour, World Cup Final with podiums
- 2026: Podium(s) finish in Ft. Worth World Cup Final, podium finish in FEI World Championships
- 2027: Fighting for top podium in Aachen CDIO with potential LA 2028 combinations; gold medal at Pan American Games with up-and-coming athletes
- 2028: Los Angeles Olympic Games

Christine Traurig, who will be Chef d’ équipe for Dressage, spoke to the BOG. She is looking at the program to get a deeper base and bigger pool of horses to pick from for the team. In 2025 - Aachen National Cup to prepare for the 2026 World Equestrian Games (WEG). Other events: 2025 and 2026 World Cups. In 2027, two national cup teams for Aachen to give large pool to pick 2028 team.

#### **Audit Committee report – approval of 2025 auditor – Kevin Reinig on behalf of Guilherme Schmidt, Chair**

The committee has reviewed and approved the financial audit for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. Paul Cormier moved and Diane Holston seconded **to approve Oberlander Financial Services, PLLC in**



**Lexington, KY be contracted to conduct the audit for fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.** Motion carried.

**Nominating Committee Report - Kate O'Connor on behalf of Linda Mendenhall, Nominating Committee Chair**

There are elections this year for president, treasurer, regional director in the even-numbered regions, and a special election for Region 7 Director.

Michelle King nominated Lorraine Musselman for treasurer. Lorraine accepted the nomination. (Steven Schubert, who was nominated for treasurer by the June 1<sup>st</sup> nomination deadline, subsequently withdrew his name for consideration prior to the convention.)

Renae Talton nominated Michael Taylor for Region 6 Director. Michael accepted the nomination.

Current Region 2 Director Debby Savage is uncontested. Current Region 4 Director Anne Sushko is uncontested. Current interim Region 7 Director Regina Antonioli is uncontested. Current Region 8 Director Helen van der Voort is uncontested. For Region 6, candidates are current Region 6 Director Noah Rattner and Michael Taylor, who was nominated from the floor.

**Presentations by candidates for USDF President and Treasurer – Kate O'Connor on behalf of Linda Mendenhall, Nominating Committee Chair**

USDF President candidate Kevin Reinig addressed the BOG.

USDF Treasurer candidate Lorraine Musselman addressed the BOG.

**Approval of committee motions and their reports – Chairs**

- **Proposed bylaws edits – Chris Trentelman, Bylaws Committee Chair**

Robert Higgins moved and Janine Malone seconded **to approve the edits in Structure, Section 2: Definitions.** Motion carried

**STRUCTURE**

**Add new:**

**Section 2. Definitions**

- A. The following rules apply in computing any time period or date certain specified in these Bylaws or the Policies and Procedures:
  - 1) When the period is stated in days or a date certain:
    - a) exclude the day of the event that triggers the period;
    - b) count every day, including intermediate Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays; and
    - c) include the last day of the period, but if the last day is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period continues to run until the end of the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.
- B. A “Member in Good Standing” is one who is in compliance with all current Bylaws, including payment of dues, and not subject to any restriction as set forth in Article V.
- C. A “Meeting” as stated in these Bylaws may be held in person or by electronic means unless otherwise stated.
- D. The term “dressage” as stated in these Bylaws includes para dressage.**

*Submitted by: USDF Bylaws Committee*

*Reason: To integrate and assimilate national para dressage interests into USDF's current structure.*

*Effective: January 1, 2025*

Lisa Gorretta moved and Kathy Grisolia seconded to approve the edits in Article V, Page 6, Membership, Section 2: Group Member Organizations. Motion carried.

## ARTICLE V Page 6

### MEMBERSHIP

Add new:

Section 2. Group Member Organizations

**o) Limited Group Member Organizations**

- 1) ***A local or regional dressage organization consisting of at least eight, but fewer than 25 dues paying members, may become a Limited Group Member Organization by submitting an application to the United States Dressage Federation which shall include:***
  - ***Payment of fees as determined by the Executive Board;***
  - ***A roster of all dues paying members; and***
  - ***An agreement to abide by the rules and regulations of the USDF concerning Group Member Organizations.***
- 2) ***Upon acceptance of the application by the USDF, the applicant will be a Limited Group Member Organization and the dues paying members of the applicant shall be considered Group Members of the USDF and granted all privileges of such membership.***
- 3) ***The Limited Group Member Organization shall not be a member of the USDF Board of Governors but otherwise shall have the same privileges and obligations as a Group Member Organization.***
- 4) ***When a Limited Group Member Organization submits a roster to the USDF of at least 25 dues paying members, it shall automatically become a member of the USDF Board of Governors and shall have those rights and obligations as a Group Member Organization.***
- 5) ***An existing Group Member Organization that, by attrition, has fewer than 25 members, but more than seven members, will automatically be reclassified as a Limited Group Member Organization with its rights and privileges.***

*Submitted by: USDF Bylaws Committee*

*Reason for proposal: The Executive Board passed a motion at their 2024 spring meeting tasking the Bylaws Committee with creating a non-voting GMO category with 8-24 members.*

*Effective: Upon approval by the Board of Governors*

Paul Cormier moved and Ken Levy seconded to approve the edits in Article V, Page 5, Membership, Section 2: Group Member Organizations. Motion carried.

## ARTICLE V Page 5

### MEMBERSHIP

Change to read:

Section 2. Group Member Organizations

- g) A–Group Member Organizations, *including Limited Group Member Organizations (as defined in letter o of this section)*, shall pay annual dues on the basis of per capita assessment of its dues-paying members as are contained in the current roster. All members of the Group Member **and Limited Group Member Organizations** shall be included on the roster and dues paid for each member. A current roster of members must be filed with the USDF on or before the beginning of each**

USDF membership year. Newly established groups shall pay their per capita assessment on their membership count as of the date of the entry into the USDF.

*Submitted by: Sarah Garn, Melissa Schoedlbauer*

*Reason for proposal: To provide clarification that dues must be submitted for each member not only in Group Member Organizations, but also for Limited Group Member Organizations. Approval of this edit will depend on whether the BOG approves the new Limited Group Member Organization category outlined in the proposed new language for Article V, Section 2.o.*

*Effective: Upon approval by the Board of Governors.*

- **Four-Year-Old Dressage Sport Horse Prospect Year-End Award proposal – Sue Mandas on behalf of Kristi Wysocki, Sport Horse Committee Chair**

Kathy Grisolia moved and Janine Malone seconded **to approve Four-Year-Old Dressage Sport Horse Prospect Year-End Award**. Motion carried.

#### **Q & A and collective approval of committee reports with no motions**

Sally Davenport moved and Fie Andersen seconded **to approve the committee reports with no motions**. Motion carried.

#### **TDF report – Jenny Johnson, Executive Director and Sarah White** *(Beth Baumert, President & CEO, unable to attend.)*

Where were you in 1989? I'm not sure if USDF had annual meetings back then, but if they did, some of you were probably there! In 1989, I attended my first 4-H horse show and proudly came home with a 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbon. I didn't tell any of my non-horsey friends that there were only four people in the class.

While I was proudly winning that 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbon in 1989, Lowell Boomer was in Lincoln, NE, hard at work establishing TDF. His vision was to create an organization that would support the educational efforts of USDF and its membership. He said, "My hope is that it will become a wellspring – a continuous, growing stream of funding to help bolster dressage education, programs, and events."

And now, 35 years later, we are proud to be here in celebration of Lowell's vision, which has only been accomplished because of thousands of incredible donors, volunteers, and friends through all those years.

I would venture to guess that nearly every person in this room has been touched by a TDF grant. Even if you have not personally received a grant, maybe your GMO has and you attended a clinic at a reduced cost. Or maybe your instructor has received TDF-funded education and they've shared that knowledge with you. Or perhaps you've watched from the rail as one of our Century Club members made that final salute on their beloved senior horse.

What started with a few grants awarded every year has blossomed into the TDF of today – over 40 different grant funds, awarding over 100 grants every year, along with programs like the Century Club and the Young Rider Dream Program. In 2024, we're on track to award over \$370,000 to individuals and groups. And this year alone, grants have been awarded in thirty-two states.

One of our most recent grants, which will be formally announced in the next few days, is to support a new Dressage4Kids initiative to create a force of youth volunteers across the country. Be watching for that information; I know everyone needs more volunteers!

Hand in hand with the increase in grants is the increase in donor support. While you may associate donations to TDF with specific grants, we are also incredibly grateful for the donations that come in to support our overall operations. Because of this support, we are very excited to share that within the next few months we will be launching a new online application system that will offer a streamlined process for

all grant applicants, even allowing you to save your application as you go. Our hope is that this will allow you to have an easier time when applying for a grant.

And now I'd like to introduce Sara Weiss, our Director of Grants and Programs, to share more exciting news specifically about grants in 2025.

Sara Weiss:

Thank you Jenny and thank you to USDF for having us. It's always a privilege to speak about the work we're doing at TDF and the opportunities we're creating to support the growth of dressage in the United States.

As the Director of Grants and Programs at TDF, I feel lucky to be able to share in that grant recipient's happiness every time we award a grant. It's humbling to be a small part of their journey.

Because of the generosity of our dressage community, we have taken Lowell Boomer's vision, which Jenny spoke of earlier, expanded it, and now work every day to fulfill this mission of advancing dressage across the United States.

As we work every day to fulfill our mission, I am pleased to announce that in 2025 we are going to be awarding over \$80,000 in additional grants. While this amount may not be world-changing, it can be world-changing for a recipient.

In the next couple of weeks, we'll make more formal announcements on these additional grants, but to give you a sneak preview here are a couple:

For high performance:

- The Dr. Anne Barlow Ramsay Awards for U.S. Bred Horses; these \$5,000 awards will be split between the owner of the horse and the breeders at the Del Mar National Show, Festival of Champions, and Dressage at Devon for the top-scoring competitor in Prix St. Georges.
- The \$15,000 Carol Lavell Developing Dressage Prize.
- In addition, for 2025 only, in honor of Carol Lavell's induction into the USDF Hall of Fame, we will be awarding an additional \$25,000 Carol Lavell Advanced Dressage Prize in early spring.

For dressage professionals:

- Five additional grants for instructors/trainers
- Additional judges' licensing grants from TDF's Judges Licensing Fund in memory of Carter Bass.
- Additional grants from the Maryal and Chalie Barnett Continuing Education Fund for instructors, to help instructors take part in the USDF Instructor/Trainer Development Program.
- An additional \$4,000 grant for dressage instructors from the Major Lindgren Fund.
- An additional \$2,500 grant for dressage instructors from the Verne Batchelder Fund for Regions 1, 3, and 8.
- We have raised the amount of the grants from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for the Veronica Holt Dressage Technical Delegate Fund and Lloyd Landkamer Show Management Fund.

For Adult Amateurs:

- Two additional \$1,500 grants from the Gifted Memorial Fund for Adult Amateurs.
- An additional \$5,000 grant from the Jane Savoie Adult Amateur Fund.

For Youth and Young Riders:

- Three additional \$1,000 grants from the Cynthia Aspden Youth & Young Rider Development Fund.

Our grants represent more than just financial support; they represent opportunity. Opportunity for riders to grow, for trainers to share their expertise, and for our entire dressage community to thrive.

As we publish this news in more detail in the next couple of weeks, I encourage you to spread the word about these grants. Whether you're a rider, a coach, a judge, or a supporter of the sport, there's something here for you or for someone you know.

I also want to talk about a TDF program that we love. TDF is the home of the Century Club! For the past four-plus years, the Century Club has had record numbers of growth. We are now well over 800 members and there is no stopping in sight. At this time, I'd love to see how many Century Club members we have here today. Please stand or raise your hand. We are thrilled you are a part of this special club!

We also want to thank all of those who helped make these special rides happen. Whether you are a show manager, instructor, horse owner, friend, or a fan who was there to lend support, thank you! We can't be at many Century Club rides, so it is incredible to see how the community supports these inspirational riders.

Since we have so many Century Club members here in one place, we'd love to take a group photo. If you can meet us at our TDF booth tomorrow (Saturday) at 11 AM, we'll take a quick photo. Thank you all for your time and please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions about our grants and programs.

Jenny Johnson returned:

As we are in this wonderful time of year, the season of giving, we hope that you can consider supporting TDF if you haven't already. You've probably heard us talk about our online auction, full of amazing items, which ends on Sunday night.

Monthly giving is becoming an increasingly popular way of donating. For the cost of a coffee, or your Spotify subscription, you can help YOUR dressage community. This fall we've had a goal of 35 new monthly donors in honor of our 35<sup>th</sup> year – and thanks to many of you who signed up yesterday – we are currently at 30 new monthly donors toward that goal of 35. Thank you!

We hope that Lowell Boomer and everyone who worked so hard for our sport and our Foundation in the early years would be proud of its growth. We always want to remember Lowell's vision for TDF to be a continuous wellspring of support for dressage. And we thank all of you who have helped TDF along the way.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM CST until tomorrow at 8:00 AM CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Reinhardt  
USDF Secretary

## **USDF Board of Governors (BOG) General Assembly**

December 7, 2024 – Houston, TX

### ***DRAFT MINUTES – PENDING 2025 BOG APPROVAL***

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM CST on Saturday, December 7, 2024.

#### **Delegate roll call – Debra Reinhardt, Secretary**

A quorum was reached.

#### **Approval of agenda – George Williams, President**

Emma Kane-Mikan moved and Paul Cormier seconded **to accept the agenda**. Motion carried.

#### **Elections for USDF President, Treasurer, and Regional Director in Regions 2, 4, 6, and 8; Special election for Region 7 Director – George Williams on behalf of Linda Mendenhall, Nominating Committee Chair**

Voting for Region 6 Regional Director.

Kevin Reinig was elected USDF President by acclamation.

Lorraine Musselman was elected USDF Treasurer by acclamation.

Debby Savage was elected USDF Region 2 Director by acclamation.

Anne Sushko was elected USDF Region 4 Director by acclamation.

Regina Antonioli was elected USDF Region 7 Director by acclamation.

Helen van der Voort was elected USDF Region 8 Director by acclamation.

Noah Rattner received 51 votes and Mike Taylor received 41 votes. Noah Rattner was reelected USDF Region 6 Director.

#### **Voting on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget – Lorraine Musselman, Treasurer**

Diane Holston moved and Sally Davenport seconded **to approve the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget**. Motion carried.

#### **Recognition of outgoing USDF President, George Williams – Presented by Kevin Reinig, Vice President**

#### **Presentation of GMO Awards – Loretta Lucas, Group Member Organizations Committee Chair and George Williams, President**

Thank you all for being here. I am Loretta Lucas, Chair of the Group Member Organizations Committee.

Each year, USDF recognizes GMOs for their outstanding efforts in providing dressage education and information to their members, through websites, newsletters, and GMO-hosted programs.

At this time, we will be celebrating the GMOs who are being recognized for their outstanding efforts in 2024, beginning with the photography awards.

The GMO Photography Award recognizes outstanding efforts by GMOs that include amateur photography in their newsletters.

#### ***BEST AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPH***

##### **CATEGORY 1: GMOs with less than 75 members**

First Place: Columbia Dressage & Combined Training Association

Photographer: Stacey Collier

### **CATEGORY 2: GMOs with 75 – 174 members**

There are no nominations in this category.

### **CATEGORY 3: GMOs with 175 – 499 members**

First Place: South Carolina Dressage & Combined Training Association

Photographer: Nancy Rogers

This award was accepted by Carol Freligh.

### **CATEGORY 4: GMOs with 500 or more members**

First Place: New England Dressage Association

Photographer: Paul Cormier

This award was accepted by Paul Cormier.

Honorable Mention: Georgia Dressage & Combined Training Association

Photographer: Laura King

### **NEWSLETTER AWARDS**

GMO Newsletter Awards recognize outstanding efforts by individuals that have had an article published in a GMO newsletter.

### ***FIRST PERSON EXPERIENCE ARTICLE***

### **CATEGORY 1: GMOs with less than 75 members**

There are no nominations in this category.

### **CATEGORY 2: GMOs with 75 – 174 members**

First Place: *Seize the Opportunity to Take the Road to United States Dressage Finals*, by Danielle

Aymond, of Southern Eventing & Dressage Association

This award was accepted by Nicole Miller.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is *And You Think I Need Glasses?*, by Nina Catanzarite, of Three Rivers Equestrian Association.

### **CATEGORY 3: GMOs with 175 – 499 members**

First Place: *Dressage: How To Improve Your Shoulder-In*, by Marietta Juillard, of South Carolina Dressage & Combined Training Association.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is *2024 Dressage Adventures and More!* by Sally Burton, of Northern Ohio Dressage Association.

### **CATEGORY 4: GMOs with 500 or more members**

First Place: *What is an Online Horse Show??*, by Arlene Rhodes, of Rocky Mountain Dressage Society

This award was accepted by Karen Harkin.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is *A Career In Review: Uloma MG-What is the Perfect Horse?*, by Emily Larson, of New England Dressage Association.

### ***GENERAL INTEREST ARTICLE***

### **CATEGORY 1: GMOs with less than 75 members**

There are no nominations in this category.

### **CATEGORY 2: GMOs with 75 – 174 members**

First Place: “2023 *On the Levels*”- *Adding to Your Dressage Knowledge Bank*, by Ellen Broadhurst, of Lehigh Valley Dressage Association. This award was accepted by Ellen Broadhurst.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is *Jacqueline Ely, Ely Equine and the Classical Dressage Journey*, by Jacqueline Ely, of Three Rivers Equestrian Association.

### **CATEGORY 3: GMOs with 175 – 499 members**

First Place: *Spotlight on NODA’s Treasurer, Dee Liebenthal*; by Patty Keim of Northern Ohio Dressage Association.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is *A World Without Horse Shows*, by Robin Fuchs, of South Carolina Dressage & Combined Training Association.

### **CATEGORY 4: GMOs with 500 or more members**

First Place: *Ingrid Klimke Masterclass ~ A Lesson in Positive Thinking*, by Kari Browne, of California Dressage Society. This award was accepted by Paula Langan.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is *What you need to know about the new Microchip Rule GR 1101.1*, by Krista Nobilo, of Rocky Mountain Dressage Society.

### **WEBSITE AWARDS**

The GMO Website Awards are designed to recognize GMOs for their outstanding website designs, which offer the best user experience. Awards in four categories are being presented:

#### **CATEGORY 1: GMOs with less than 75 members**

First Place: Columbia Dressage & Combined Training Association

#### **CATEGORY 2: GMOs with 75 – 174 members**

First Place: Southern Eventing & Dressage Association  
This award was accepted by Nicole Miller.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is Lehigh Valley Dressage Association.

#### **CATEGORY 3: GMOs with 175 – 499 members**

First Place: Northern Ohio Dressage Association

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is South Carolina Dressage & Combined Training Association.

#### **CATEGORY 4: GMOs with 500 or more members**

First Place: California Dressage Society  
This award was accepted by Paula Langan.

Receiving Honorable Mention in this category is Georgia Dressage & Combined Training Association, Inc.

### **CREATIVE GMO-SPONSORED PROGRAM AWARD**

The winner of this year’s Creative GMO-Sponsored Program Award is Mid-Ohio Dressage Association with their program, Winter Warm-up Challenge. Receiving Honorable Mention is Rocky Mountain Dressage Society for their program, Dressage For Newbies.



### **REGIONAL GMO VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

The Regional GMO Volunteer of the Year Award is awarded to one GMO volunteer from each USDF region. The commitment of these individuals often proves to be the backbone of Group Member Organizations. This award is USDF's way of recognizing outstanding volunteer efforts at the local level. We are honored to present the following individuals with this award:

**REGION 1:** Alison May (nominated by Potomac Valley Dressage Association)  
This award was accepted by Alison May.

**REGION 2:** Janice Smith (nominated by GLASS-ED)

**REGION 3:** Simone Cormier (nominated by STRIDE)

**REGION 4:** Lauren Fritz– (nominated by Columbia Dressage & Combined Training Association)

**REGION 5:** Cynthia Ganem (nominated by Arizona Dressage Association)

**REGION 6:** Rosa Meehan (nominated by (Alaska Dressage Association)  
This award was accepted by Rosa Meehan.

**REGION 7:** Lynda Palmer (nominated by California Dressage Society)  
This award was accepted by Lynda Palmer.

**REGION 8:** Kari Cincotta (New England Dressage Association)  
This award was accepted by Kari Cincotta.

**REGION 9:** Janelle Williams (Central Plains Dressage Society, Inc.)  
This award was accepted by Christina Harmon.

This year we have a fun award that has been judged right here at convention, the **Best GMO Basket Award**. Group Member Organizations Committee members have looked at all the wonderful baskets that have been donated and have selected a winner in three categories:

The best GMO basket for a GMO with less than 75 members goes to Alaska Dressage Association.

The best GMO basket for a GMO with 75 – 200 members goes to Connecticut Dressage Association.

The best GMO basket for a GMO with more than 200 members goes to Rocky Mountain Dressage Society.

### **RUTH ARVANETTE MEMORIAL FUND**

Ruth Arvanette was a long-time USDF employee. Until the time she passed away, Ruth was always a supporter of USDF and was instrumental in many programs still in place today. She wanted to make attending the convention a reality for everyone, especially USDF Group Members.

In her honor, USDF developed the Ruth Arvanette Memorial Fund grant. Ruth hoped that Group Members attending the convention might take home with them the information they gathered and help their GMOs through their new-found knowledge. USDF is pleased to continue Ruth's dream and legacy through the Ruth Arvanette Memorial Fund.

The recipient of this year's Ruth Arvanette Memorial Fund grant is Lisa Webster from Aloha State Dressage Society.

**Before we conclude, we would like to take a moment to recognize several GMOs celebrating milestone anniversaries this year.**

First, congratulations to the Michiana Dressage Club, Inc., celebrating 25 years in 2024. We also want to recognize six GMOs marking their 50-year anniversary in 2024:

- Deep South Dressage & Combined Training Association
- Equestrians' Institute
- Georgia Dressage & Combined Training Association, Inc.
- Long Island Dressage Association
- Western Pennsylvania Dressage Association
- Oley Valley Combined Training Association

Thank you for your dedication and hard work in promoting dressage in your regions. We wish you many more years of continued success!

This concludes the 2024 GMO Awards presentation. Thank you to the GMOs who submitted nominations, and congratulations to all our winners.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 AM CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Reinhardt  
USDF Secretary