

Virginia Dressage Association Charlottesville Chapter



JANUARY 2021

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[Next Meeting;](#)
[February 8th 2021 at 7](#)
[pm via Zoom.](#)



Message from the President

Hi Everyone,
Greetings from Florida, I hope you are all staying warm and getting to ride.

This month we have a lovely article from Helle Steward who was a scholarship winner. She writes to tell us how she used and benefitted from the scholarship. Last week we had yoga for riding Zoom clinic with Erin Sweeney, sadly I missed it but I hope you all got to participate and enjoyed it.

Don't forget we have a monthly board meeting by Zoom. We would love to have more participants. We will send out instructions by email as a reminder. Please come join us.

It will soon be spring again, And shows will start back up so keep on riding.
Regards to all of you. See you in March.

Warmest Regards
Melyni

Mark Your Calendar: Next meeting on February 8th, 2021 at 7 pm via Zoom.
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7320876552?pwd=bE45KzJjbFduM211N2N1YWdZU3psdz09>
Meeting ID: 732 087 6552
Passcode: VADA



HOW MY SCHOLARSHIP MONEY HELPED ME WITH MY TROT WORK...

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT TROT BY HELLE STEWART

I was very grateful to have been one of the lucky recipients of the 2019 VADA-CH scholarship. In trying to decide what to do with the generous scholarship money, my current trainer, Hannah Pierucci-Schmidt, suggested I schedule some lessons with George Williams.

I should probably tell you a little about myself. I ride Connor, a 14-year-old Hanoverian gelding. I've owned Connor since he was 5 years old and have shown him through 2nd level in the years from 2012-2016. In 2017 I underwent two back surgeries for spinal stenosis and a ruptured L4-L5 disk. Understandably my recovery was slow and difficult and riding consisted mostly of trail rides. In the Spring of 2019, we were reintroduced to Hannah. She had returned to the area after having been away for several years and we began training with her. This was a lucky reunion because Hannah had actually ridden Connor before I bought him. The two knew each other well. We returned to competition at a third level at the VADA fall show 2019 and it was around this time that Hannah suggested we pursue lessons with George Williams.

We were able to take our first lesson with George last October. We travel to Gardy Bloemers' beautiful facility, Stave Mill Farm, near Scottsville. George had given us specific and detailed directions since there are some roads in the area that are not suitable for horse trailers. I must admit I was a bit nervous meeting George Williams for the first time, however, George immediately made us feel comfortable. George asked for a brief history then quickly outfitted us with a headset. The use of the headset added to the level of professionalism I experienced working with George. He stayed in the center of the arena which allowed him to follow us closely making corrections to my seat/legs or hand position during the ride. Our first ride started out on a 20m circle in the center of the arena following the outline George has published as his "kindergarten exercises" (Dressage Today May 2019, originally Oct 2009) - getting the horse responsive to the inside and outside leg and rein. He was asking for Connor to reach forward and down to get good movement over the back.

I must admit writing this sounds a lot easier than it is or has been for us, but George was patient and did not try to push us into movements that were beyond our ability. Hannah was able to join us for the session and videotaped the ride. This proved tremendously helpful as I was able to reconcile the feeling I had during the ride with the way it looked.

Due to scheduling conflicts, I was not able to return to Scottsville until this past October/November. Obviously, since it had been a year since we had previously met, this second lesson consisted of getting reacquainted. Our riding was not particularly spectacular but we were able to work on connection, the softness of the inside rein, and moving from inside leg to outside rein. Had it not been for the scholarship I probably would have bailed on subsequent lessons due to the effort of trailering out and the difficulty of riding in an unfamiliar arena. However, I stuck with the plan and returned the next week as scheduled. This lesson went significantly better. After a short session on the lunge we were sent into the arena and this help from the lunge was exactly the help we needed to develop the feeling of the inside bend which then again allowed positioning the shoulder from the inside leg. This is a particular issue for us as Connor has a habit of dropping the right shoulder.



HOW MY SCHOLARSHIP MONEY HELPED ME WITH MY TROT WORK...

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT TROT BY HELLE STEWART

This session paved the way for our third lesson. In this lesson we were able to move forward into a soft connection with much more of a forward trot.

On the topic of connection, George attempted to help me understand that "riding is a feeling each rider has to develop" by using a metaphor he thought I might understand. He used the example of performing surgery - something I am familiar with from my professional life - since I have spent years perfecting the "right touch" when it comes to tissue handling. I now need to perfect "the right touch" feeling in the connection with Connor.

We also discussed the "quality" of the trot. George used the metaphor of cooking - and how to find just the right balance of spices - just as you would find the correct balance of the aids. You could end up with way too much of "this" or "that" if you want "all in" with one spice without tasting or "feeling" your way. He also referenced a former teacher who likened this to driving down an unfamiliar road while you are looking for the place to turn - if you don't pay attention you will drive by your turn without even seeing it. This is where we discussed "experimenting" with different aids to see if something might produce just the "right" balance, or in other words "Searching for the Perfect Trot."

My 4 sessions with George Williams have been a tremendous help in our path towards advancing our riding as we strive to successfully show in both 3rd and 4th level. It has been well worth taking the time and making the effort to trailer out for lessons. It was incredibly validating to have been given the metaphors I have described; illustrating that the journey we are on is personal and that there are no "magic bullets" or "one right answer." Connor and I have plenty of material to work on with Hannah as we practice over the winter months in preparation for the show season.

I would like to thank the VADA-CH for this educational opportunity. Thank you to the volunteers who continue to be the lifeblood of VADA-CH.

Also, a big thank you to George Williams who graciously welcomed us for these lessons, showed genuine interest in our progress, and provided us with encouragement to continue our dressage journey.



VADA ANNUAL MEETING AND YEAR-END AWARDS

Sunday, 21 February 2021

7:00 P.M.

Zoom Event

R.S.V.P. to

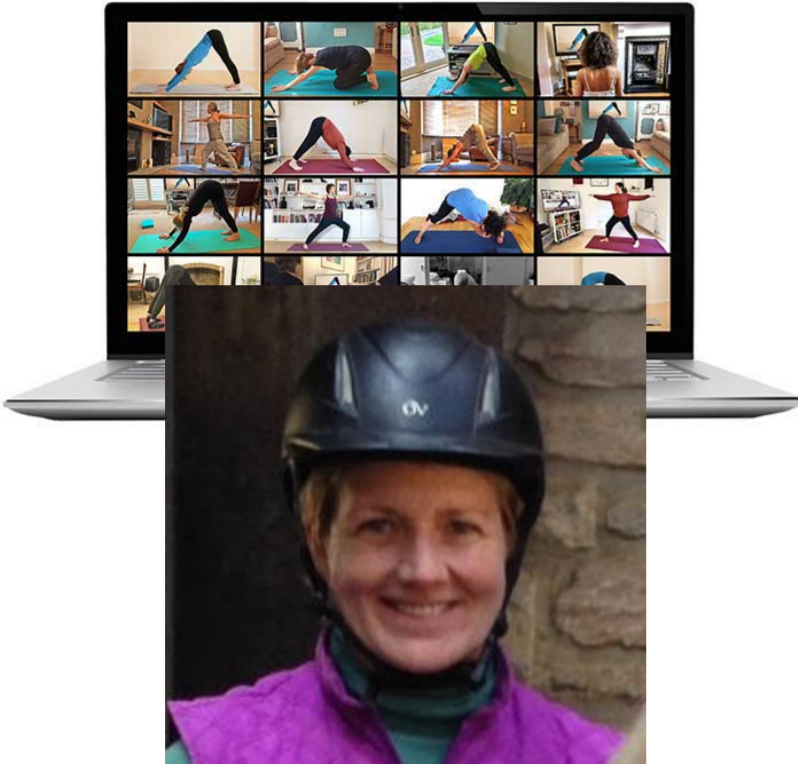
Bettina Longaker

vadvirag8@gmail.com

For further information, visit the VADA website.
virginiadressage.org



Zoom is 2021's Hottest Yoga Studio ... Yoga for Riders



VADA-Charlottesville is offering a free yoga class designed for equestrians. This class will be taught by Erin Sweeney and will be done through Zoom. Classes will be held every other week for six sessions, and start promptly at 7:00 pm.

Class Schedule

19 January, 7 pm

2 and 16 February, 7 pm

2 and 16 March, 7 pm

Please join us for a fun and relaxing evening! To R.S.V.P email Eleszabeth McNeel at e7aquila@aol.com no later than the morning of each class date. It is asked of all participants to sign on to Zoom at least 5 minutes before the class commences. A reminder will be sent out to all Chapter members before each class.

Get to Know Your Yoga Instructor

Erin Sweeney is a USDF Certified Instructor/Trainer, USDF Bronze, and Silver Medalist, and ryt 200 registered yoga instructor. She teaches dressage students with an emphasis on the classical dressage training scale, correct rider position, and safety in the saddle and on the ground. These skills combine to achieve an effective, elegant, and harmonious horse and rider combination. She has extensive experience starting, developing, and competing horses with and has successfully competed for horses at national through FEI levels, FEI/USEF Young Horse classes, and inbreeding/materiale classes and have multiple high score and Horse of the Year awards to her credit. In lessons and clinics, Erin creates a safe and empathic learning environment in which horse and rider can learn and excel through the levels. Erin has also designed a special Yoga for Equestrians practice and can travel to your barn, horse show, event, or clinic for an onsite yoga break.



*Congratulations to Becca Pizmoht!
The winner of Foxden Equine
Saddle Pad.*



2021 Shows and Clinics: Mark Your Calendar



MDS WINTER SERIES
 VINTAGE VALLEY SPORHORSES
 CATLETT, VA

DEC 6, 2020
 JAN 10, 2021
 FEB 7, 2021
 MARCH 7, 2021

WWW.MITCHELLDS.COM

ENTER ON: STRIDERPRO.COM

Mitchell Dressage Series Offering Two Winter Series!
 Our normal winter dressage series at Vintage Valley Sport Horses
 And our virtual dressage series!
 Both will have their own series end awards.
 Enter here: <https://www.striderpro.com/calendar?searchText=MDS>

Discover Your Potential By Building A Solid Foundation



Clinicians

George Williams
 Trainer/Williams Dressage

Bill Warren
 Trainer/Warren-McMullin Dressage

Exercises to help you maximize your horse's performance, riding before a judge or mirror.

VADA and Stave Mill Farm
 hosting
 An Auditor-Friendly Symposium

26-27 June 2021

Stave Mill Farm
 Esmont, VA

For more info visit our website virginiadressage.org for symposium details or contact Michelle King amking91@verizon.net.



Isabel F. De Szinay Memorial Dressage Show
 May 29-30 2021

VADA-Charlottesville Chapter is proud to host this annual licensed competition at Culpeper HITS show grounds.

This show is VADA-CH's major fundraiser to support our educational programs.

Show details available on the vadach.org website and the Isabel F. De Szinay Memorial Dressage Facebook page.

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Dressage at Lexington - 16-18 July 2021, Virginia Horse Center, Lexington, Virginia

Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 1 Dressage Competition and VADA Fall Competition - 7-10 October 2021, Virginia Horse Center, Lexington, Virginia



Bull Run Hunt

Foxhunting in the Virginia counties of Culpeper, Madison, Orange, and Spotsylvania

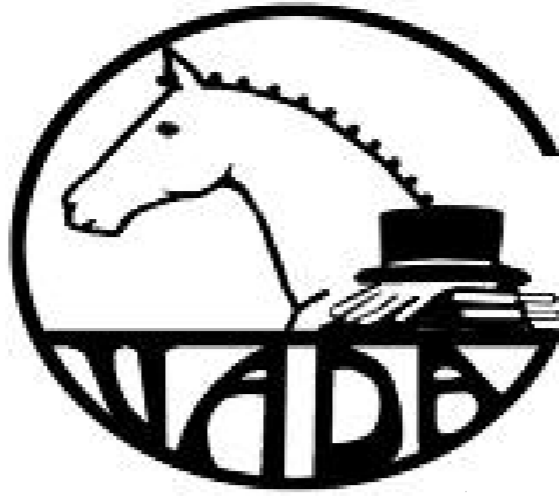
A COVID Compliant Dressage Schooling Show Series

17 April, 15 May and 5 June 2021

Locust Hill Stables
 Locust Dale, Virginia

The Bull Run Hunt would like to welcome all competitors to experience a fun day of dressage competition and awards. The Show Series will have Team Competition, Prix Caprillii Jumping, and Western Dressage. Overall High Score of the day awarded at each show. Overall Series High Score and Overall Team Competition High Score pinned for each level after the show series.

Additional information forthcoming.



ADVERTISING RATES

Full page \$15 issue \$150/year
 ½ page \$10/issue or \$100/year
 ¼ page \$7.50/issue or \$75/year
 Business card \$5/issue \$50/year
 Classified \$5/issue \$50/year

Business card and classified ads are free for current members.

Please email ads to Becca at rpizmoht@aol.com

before the 25th of each month.

Checks are payable to VADA - Ch and should be mailed to

Sherri Booye 721 Lake Rd.
 Troy, VA 22974

No ads will be run without payment being received

Elizabeth E. McNeel
 Specializing in Equine Fine Art Photography E7Aquila@aol.com
 www.fineartamerica.com

Confidence
 Harmony
 Balance
 Safety

Through
DRESSAGE LLC
 Erin Sweeney
 Dressage Instruction
 USDF Bronze & Silver Medalist and USDF Certified
 Text/Cell: 434-960-6967 erin@dressage.cc

stavemillfarm.com

STAVE MILL FARM
 Boutique Dressage Training Facility
 Boarding: Full-time or Short Stay
 Training with George and Roberta Williams
 gandy@gandybloomers.com 434-981-1017

GREBER
 DRESSAGE

Bruno & Barbara Greber 5173 Sugar Ridge Road 434 823 2237 farm
 bbgreber@aol.com Crozet, VA 22932 434 960 2515 cell

Grayson Farm

Premier Board Facility
 Dressage Instruction Available
 Training thru Grand Prix
 Indoor Arena w/ lights and rubber footing
 Outdoor Dressage Arena w/ sand footing
 Large Jump Ring w/ sand footing
 Full XC Course
 300 Acres of Trails and Fields
 Acres of Beautiful Grassy Turnout
 Health, Happy Horses
 15 Minutes from Charlottesville

Kim Schmidt 434-286-4130
kkjschmidt@gmail.com
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