



Western New York Dressage Association

Highlights Newsletter

Your USDF Group Membership Organization

ISSUE WINTER 2025



Houghton University Equestrian Needs Our Help for Arena Footing Upgrade

Our good friends at the Houghton University Equestrian Center are raising funds to upgrade their outdoor competition arena base and footing.



Generous donors have already contributed over \$32,000 to this project. Our help is needed to raise the remaining \$23,000. This important project involves taking the arena down to its base, leveling and fixing drainage issues, and replenishing the footing to ensure the arena can continue to support top-quality training/competition moving forward.

If you are interested in making a gift to this vital project, please give directly to Houghton University through an online gift: <https://community.houghton>. (click "Other" and then write: Equestrian Outdoor Arena Project).

If you have any questions or need additional information about making a gift, please contact Larissa Ries at [585.567.9335](tel:585.567.9335) or Larissa.ries@houghton.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!

2025 EVENTS CALENDAR

Check WNYDA.org for the complete season of event information and entries

3/23

Year-end Banquet, 2:30 pm
Flavor Restaurant, RSVP to
wynda.org

5/3 & 5/4

Lisa El-Ramey Clinic
Contact Dawn Arnold

7/26 & 7/27

WNYDA Summer Festival 1 & 2
USEF/USDF

3/31

Art Contest Entries Due
Form at WNYDA.org

5/30 & 5/31

Houghton Spring Dressage 1 & 2,
USEF/USDF

8/12

Twilight Dressage/ Challenge Series #3
Hideaway Farm (pending)

4/27

WNYDA ProBono Youth Clinic
najohnson75@yahoo.com

5/24, 6/28, 10/19

Challenge Series Shows
Cobblestone Equestrian Center

8/23 & 8/24

CDCT - Dressage In Wine Country 1 & 2
Horseheads, NY

5/3

Challenge Series Show #1
Houghton College Equestrian Center

7/19

Chestnut Ridge Summer Schooling
Combined Test, Dressage, Trials

8/31

Stagecoach West Challenge Series #4

9/13

Saddle-up for Roswell at Chestnut Ridge

FALL SYMPOSIUM with LISA SCHMIDT
Rider Position and Dressage Seat Equitation
October 25-26, 2025

WNYDA SUMMER FESTIVAL I & II

July 20th & 21st, Hosted by Houghton College Equestrian Center

Judges: Pending

Competitor Party is Saturday Night, July 20th, including our Ice Cream Social and Fun Awards

Saturday: Materiale Classes, National Pony Cup Classes, Lead line Exhibition Class

Both Days: USEF/FEI Eventing Test of Choice, Breed High Point Awards

Visit WNYDA.org for details on open and closing dates to enter.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear WNYDA members,

I am honored to introduce myself as the new President of the Western New York Dressage Association. After serving on the Board for the past several years, it is a privilege to serve this vibrant and passionate community. I am excited to continue the tradition of excellence and dedication that has defined our association for so many years.

As an avid dressage enthusiast, I have always been committed to the growth and promotion of this beautiful sport. My background in equestrian competition, training, and education has given me a deep appreciation for the skill, discipline, and artistry that dressage embodies. More importantly, I recognize the value of a strong, supportive community where riders of all levels can learn, thrive, and achieve their goals. As I step into this role, my focus will be on fostering education, expanding opportunities for riders, and strengthening the bonds within our association. Whether it's through high-quality clinics, competitions, or member events, my goal is to ensure that WNYDA remains a hub of excellence and camaraderie for dressage enthusiasts in our region.

WNYDA has an exciting and eventful year ahead along with the club's 50th anniversary! The Pro Bono Youth clinic will take place in April at the Niagara County Fairgrounds. Annual Art contest with categories including visual art, creative writing, performance art, and music. A total of eight Challenge Series shows will take place across Western New York from May to November. The Summer Festival, which is our recognized show, is scheduled to take place July 26 and 27 at Houghton Equestrian Center. A Fall Symposium is on the docket for October 25-26 with clinician Lisa Schmidt. For the most current information and additional events, please visit WNYDA's official website, www.wnyda.org.

With the series of happenings in Western New York, volunteerism is truly the heart of WNYDA. The contribution of your time to our club is invaluable and greatly appreciated. There will be ample volunteer opportunities available in 2025 to make WNYDA the best organization possible and to allow our events to thrive. Please consider getting involved! To inquire about volunteer opportunities or offer your assistance this season, please contact wnyda@wnyda.org

I am eager to hear from our members and work together to shape the future of WNYDA. Your input, ideas, and passion are what make this organization strong, and I encourage everyone to share their thoughts on how we can continue to grow and improve. I look forward to an exciting year ahead and to seeing many of you at upcoming events. Together, let's make this a successful and enriching chapter for the Western New York Dressage Association in celebration of the club's 50th anniversary!

Warmest regards,
Jen Powell



WNYDA YOUTH PROBONO CLINIC 2024

The WNYDA Youth Pro Bono Clinic took place on April 21, 2024, at the Niagara County Fairgrounds. It was a chilly day, but everyone appeared to have a fantastic time and learned a lot from our wonderful instructors who generously donated their time and expertise.

The Niagara County Fairgrounds provided the perfect venue for the event. The clinic was held in the large indoor arena, and despite the rain before the clinic, the outdoor arena had good footing for a warm-up. Because this was a youth educational event, the fairgrounds provided the facility and stalls for no charge. A huge thank you to our knowledgeable instructors who graciously donated their time and knowledge to educate our local youth on dressage: JoAnne Young, Judy West, Susan Gilson, Paula Cahill, Susan Gawley, Val McClosky, Natalie Shappard, Megan Boss, and Dawn Arnold. They held 20 lessons in total. Each instructor taught 2-3 lessons for 45 minutes each. Two lessons were held at a time, one at each end of the indoor arena.

We had a wide range of riders, including some with ponies who rode walk-trot, as well as other youth who typically compete in the hunter series. Our volunteers played a crucial role in setting up and tearing down, ensuring the day ran smoothly with their helpful proficiency. Megan Smits lent her talents to photographing the day. Her knowledge of dressage enabled her to capture perfect photographs of each child concentrating hard during their private lessons. Thank you to Leah Redding (ring steward), Mary Barron and Carly Starkey (check-in), Nadine Wawrzyniec, and Nancy Shaw (basket raffle). Also, a big thank you to Gillian Tagliaferro (demo rider and tear down) and Michele Kerr (set-up and snacks) for their contributions.



During lunchtime, we showcased 3 demo rides of different levels, which drew a big crowd. Molly Krotz demonstrated training level, Gillian Tagliaferro demonstrated 1st level, and Natalie Shappard performed a 2nd level test. Judy West did an excellent job announcing all the movements of each test, allowing participants to learn what is expected of the horse and rider as they progress through the levels.

Local farms, businesses, and fellow horse enthusiasts generously donated baskets for the kids to enjoy participating in the basket raffle. Dirty Birds Food Truck hosted a warm lunch for all to enjoy.

The event had an amazing turnout, and we are looking forward to next year. We are always striving to learn and improve, so we have considered many wonderful suggestions to make next year's event even better. Once again, thank you to all who volunteered for this event! We couldn't offer this wonderful opportunity for our youth without all your help!

Photo caption: Instructor Val McClosky, Rider Lainey Powell (8) riding Scotch, Photo Credit: Megan Smits



WNYDA SYMPOSIUM 2024

By Natalie Sheppard

The WNYDA Symposium has been a major highlight for me the past couple of years since moving to this area - it is not only such a great opportunity to learn from the best, but it is one of the few times you get to spend a whole weekend surrounded by like-minded riders, trainers, and enthusiasts! And in every sense this year's symposium with Kristi Wysocki did not disappoint!

This year's topic was essentially the ways in which different conformation can affect the training and performance of each horse. This is both a fascinating subject in general, and one that is important to the grander plan of ensuring that dressage is accessible to every horse and rider that wants to participate at any level! I was lucky enough to be chosen as one of the demo riders - or rather, I should say my horse was chosen, as Kristi made a concerted effort to ensure that we had a broad field of different breeds and body types to compare throughout the weekend. Additionally, conformation photos of each of the horses were included in the program, so that spectators could clearly see each physical trait being discussed and make notes.

Each demo was insightful, detailed, and hands-on. Kristi stood to point out each detail on the horse's

body as they stood, held a dressage whip up to clearly display the angles in question, and engaged with the audience about how they thought each factor might affect each given horse's performance. She was able to predict certain strengths and weaknesses in many of the horse's movement patterns, and offered helpful insight into how one might feature the good or compensate for the bad. There were even demos of how to improve one's sitting trot using a yoga ball, and a simulation involving a bit with reins wrapped around one participant's waist while the other held the reins in order for each to feel the effects of different levels of contact.

After a long day of learning, we all got together for a delightful taco dinner! Kristi had many fascinating stories of her experiences as a judge, and also shared several insights into the equestrian industry and the current state of our sport. Many of us who might only see each other in passing at shows had a chance to catch up and socialize, and the energy of the group as a whole was invigorating.

So many of us feel like we are practicing dressage in a vacuum year round, alone in our arenas, and I think it is so important to connect with the larger community like this whenever possible to keep our passion for the sport ignited and fresh! The 2024 Symposium certainly provided a good dose of that for me, and I look forward to seeing even more of you come together to learn and celebrate in 2025!

Photo credits: Alex Hopple Photography

EXTRAORDINARY MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

Barnes, Mary Elizabeth	Bronze Medal
Monaco-Tona, Kristen Marie	Bronze Medal
Sheppard, Natalie	Bronze Medal
Bieler, Kathryn	Silver Medal
Furst, Prin	Dressage Seat Equitation - Accomplished
Barnes, Mary Elizabeth	Freestyle Bronze Bar
Adelizi, Lauren Dembkoski	Gold Medal
Bieler, Kathryn	Master's Challenge - 4th
Bieler, Kathryn	Master's Challenge - FEI
Arnold, Dawn	Performance Award - Training
Hepler, Sarah	Performance Award - Training



YOUR 2025 WNYDA BOARD

Jennifer Powell - President
Amy Winnen - Vice President
Nicole Olivero - Corresponding Secretary
Betsy Levy-Doyle - Recording Secretary
Lauren Adelizi - Treasurer
Member at Large - Larissa Ries
Member at Large - Leah Rider
Member at Large - Natalie Sheppard

CALL FOR ARTISTS

*WNYDA 50th Anniversary ART CONTEST!
Win Dressage Education Funds!*

Prize money for your original horse-related creative work and the opportunity to be featured at the WNYDA 50th Anniversary Celebration, November 1&2, 2025, at Houghton University.

Accepting entries postmarked before March 31, 2025.

Categories: Visual Art (Painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, textiles), Creative Writing, Performance Art, or Music

Gold Prize \$150 Silver Prize \$100 Bronze Prize \$50 MULTIPLE PRIZES AT EACH LEVEL!

An advertisement for the WNYDA Summer Festival Fun Awards and Ice Cream Social. The background is light blue with several pink ice cream cones scattered around. The text is centered and reads: "WNYDA Summer Festival Fun Awards and Ice Cream Social Saturday, July 26th". Below this, it says: "Join the fun and sponsor an award! To get involved contact Kait at equineexposure@gmail.com". Further down, it says: "Fun awards have ranged from specific breed awards, to youngest entry, to 'I won the warm-up but it all went downhill from there'. Feel free to be creative and come up with something new!". At the bottom, it says: "This event celebrates all the victories of the day and gives everyone an opportunity to socialize over something sweet!".

**WNYDA Summer Festival
Fun Awards and Ice Cream Social
Saturday, July 26th**

Join the fun and sponsor an award! To get involved contact Kait at equineexposure@gmail.com

Fun awards have ranged from specific breed awards, to youngest entry, to "I won the warm-up but it all went downhill from there". Feel free to be creative and come up with something new!

This event celebrates all the victories of the day and gives everyone an opportunity to socialize over something sweet!

Introducing New Members

Welcome to our newest Members! We are delighted to have you join us for the 2025 season!

Taylor McNeely—Montgomery, NY
Bonnie McDermott—Montgomery, NY
Alexaiya Backman—Scottsville, NY

2025 Donor Recognition

We are so grateful for our Donors this year. Your generosity helps us keep our special projects moving and allows our members to have a better experience.

Bronze: Kristy Ostrovsky

Bronze: Susan Chang

Bronze: Carrie Wafler

Silver: Taylor Mcneely

Silver: Carol Ranke

Silver: Barbara Hyams

Gold: Adrienne Racheli

Gold: Victoria Bentley

Gold: Natalie Sheppard

Gold: Holly Parker

Platinum: Leonie Fernandes

Diamond: Kathryn Bieler

Diamond: Karen Warren



Horseshowing Members (L to R)
Kourtney Korzack (with Blackjack), Holly Parker,
Alesaiya Backman and Audrey Clarke



Member Faith Hainsworth entering at "A" with Blue at HITS



Member Marianne Stowell with Jupiter
(Photo: Q2 Photography)



Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Rochester, NY
Permit No. 298

wnyda.org



WNYDA is a USDF Group
Member Organization.
Members are automatic
USDF Group Members.



ARE YOU READY FOR THE 2025 SHOW SEASON?



Photo credits: Alex Hopple Photography