

**New England Dressage Association
Board of Directors
Summary of Meeting
December 15, 2010**

Participating in person: PCormier, KO'Connor, APlum, SMcKeown, ADane, SEdelen, DHolston, KHickerson, AYama, HStone, LJohnson, BJenkins, SDavenport, LMendenhall, APrenosil, JSheehan, KSwanfeldt

Participating via conference call: DCarr-Kirk, Jen Dillon (joined at 7:30PM)

Secretary's Report

It was **VOTED** to approve the minutes for the November meeting, with the various changes emailed to Heather prior to the meeting. The board determined that the summary of the November meeting should be posted on the website.

Financial Report and Treasurer's Report

There was no finance committee meeting this month.

Carol Gordon circulated the Balance Sheet and P&L Actual vs Budget through 12/13/10 in advance of the meeting.

The investment information was circulated by Kathy McHugh in advance of the meeting.

After discussion, it was **VOTED** to accept the financial report and the treasurer's report.

At the meeting, Sue reminded everyone to turn in their final expenses and other budget items for 2010 to Carol Gordon ASAP and to be prepared for the budget meeting in January.

USDF Convention Wrap Up

Beth was appointed Vice President of USDF. Sue updated the board on the variations of a helmet policy that are being considered by the USEF, which were previewed at the convention. The board should look at what is adopted in January by USEF and decide if NEDA's Helmet Policy needs to be adjusted.

NEDA Boutique

Debbie confirmed that she informed Norumbega that NEDA would not be renewing the contract for 2011. A constant contact email was sent out helping her to advertise their remaining NEDA product and there will be an advertisement in the January TIP. Deb will coordinate getting the blue pop-up tent back from Norumbega. Presentations from George Atamian, Sue Storbeck's contact and any other contacts should be arranged for February.

Strategic Planning Session

The board decided to solicit input from the membership prior to the strategic planning meeting, most likely through a Constant Contact email. Alison agreed to work with Jen Dillon to set it up, with input on the wording from Kathy. The 26th of February was the first choice of the board, with the

27th the second choice. The board members should hold both pending finalization with the venue. Once the venue is chosen, the board will determine what non-board member participants, if any, should be included in the planning meeting. After discussion, the board **VOTED** to ask Sue McKeown to facilitate the strategic planning meeting, and she accepted.

Equine Journal

Deb Carr-Kirk and Arabella Plum led a discussion of the Equine Journal proposal. Arabella's feeling is that we get plenty of coverage (perhaps too much) with Equine Journal already. Arabella pointed out that their circulation is significantly larger than their readership, and questioned whether their target audience is the same as NEDA's audience, or that the non-dressage audiences were big enough to merit this level of investment. Also, our membership that is business based is relatively small, and so many of the benefits that Equine Journal is offering are not useful to the most of NEDA's membership. Arabella's feeling is that the extra money would be better spent on digital advertising rather than print advertising. Jen Dillon pointed out that NEDA could also better spend the money on more national vs. regional (such as Dressage Daily). Or, if we went the publications route, into publications with a more direct dressage focus such as Dressage Today. Also, from the 2009 survey, only 2% of NEDA members said that they get their information from publications. Most get their information from NEDA's website, from email alerts and from the TIP. Several board members pointed out that Equine Journal doesn't include any digital component at all, and that perhaps NEDA should go to other publications proactively such as the Peddler, the Chronicle and a few others and see what they might offer for NEDA's advertising dollars. Arabella agreed to head up a discussion of NEDA's goals for membership/advertising at the January meeting, and also at the strategic planning meeting. After further discussion, the board **VOTED** that NEDA should not accept the Equine Journal proposal. Karin agreed to go back to Equine Journal with the decision.

Coordinator Reports

Technology –

Alison Yama discussed technology.

- 1) The technology committee has been evaluating membership software. There are some challenges that we have identified that have implications for how we use our website. The board can discuss a few issues during the Tech portion of the agenda.
- 2) Facebook followers - 566 for NEDA page, 467 Education page.
- 3) Website - average 4 pages per visit, top pages are all bulletin board pages. We are packing the website full of information, but yet people use it for downloading documents and access to the bulletin board.

Alison reported on the new website layout. Looking at the usage reports, Alison pointed out that (a) NEDA's voice is now really Facebook and other electronic news outlets other than the website, and (b) NEDA's website is really used by members only to download documents, like a filing cabinet, and to access the bulletin board. And the problem is that the website is not organized in a manner that is conducive to members finding the documents that they may be looking for. Membership software that is readily available will allow members to automatically be recognized when they go to the NEDA website, with automatic access levels, etc. It is expandable by adding modules in the future. A board member pointed out that the software may be too simple for some of NEDA's more sophisticated needs. Alison pointed out that the technology committee plans to start putting out the new website in late January, early February on a rolling, page-by-page basis. The most time consuming parts will be setting up the membership

database so that we are capturing the right membership data, and building the access levels correctly. Each coordinator, if they haven't already done so, needs to tell Alison what information they'd like collected and presented for their area ASAP. Alison and the committee will carry on and will make a further report at a future meeting. Several board members pointed out that Alison and the committee should look at PVDA's website, which won the USDF's website award.

Fall Show –

Beth Jenkins discussed the Fall Show. Competitions in a lull. I am working on the schedule and full prize list for the 2011 Fall Show. And have three judges for 2012: Janet Foy, Gary Rockwell, Dolly Hannon. Wrapping my head around the USDF VP position. So far quiet. I wrote a letter to the editor for the Connection. And passed a few emails back and forth with the office. I have some ideas to pass by NEDA at the Strategic Planning session.

Spring Show –

Paul Cormier discussed the Spring Show. Not much activity as of yet. Four of the five judges hired for the show were in attendance at the USDF convention and I spoke to them all and they are very pleased to be coming to NEDA. Meredith Ferland was hired as TD for a second year however she recently informed me that her sister will be getting married on the same weekend as the show so she has withdrawn as TD for the show she will be getting her own replacement. I will be contacting Paul Eason after the first of the year to hire him as announcer for the show once more. Things have worked out very well in the past and he has a couple of ideas to increase revenue for the show. Ribbon order will be made after the first of the year in order to take advantage of the Hodge 10% discount. Any Board members wishing to volunteer can let me know.

Sport Horse –

Kathy Hickerson discussed Sport Horse.

Stallion Auction

Very busy with this right now. Our new stallion recruiter Silene White is getting up to speed and stallions are coming in fast now. Some a bit late for the January Tip Stallion Issue, but no problem getting in for the auction.

Installed the updated stallion software. Put it on a new server to hopefully prevent the problems we had last year where the auction froze during the final bidding time. We have a new domain with it www.nedastallionauction.org.

Investigating adding Paypal, so our bidders can use that or a credit card to pay. Should be able to use the same paypal account that is already set up from education. The auction software has the capability. As soon as I can get the account I will add it in there.

January Stallion Issue - The Tip

This is the 2nd issue of the Tip. We had some delays. Sorry Tracie. Martyna Echilczuk wrote a nice article on Material classes. Elizabeth Preston also wrote at the last minute for us about her experience and recommendations as a first time person. She and her mother Susan Barrett came to the handling clinic, showed the season with their horse Encore! Encore!

Went on to be NEDA Fall Festival Young Horse Champion. Volunteered and now is running the handling clinic for 2011.

We have a lot more ads from the stallion owners this year too. The 1/2 page ad they get free and at least 2 of them so far are upgraded to full page ad at the non member price. Maybe when we bill them, we can offer membership if they are not already a member.

Rachel Erhlich suggested a trifold display at Equine Affaire showing off the NEDA Stallion Auction and have flyers of the stallions that were donated this year. Rachel will put it together. She is always at Equine Affaire to help manage it. Karin agreed it was good to have.

Rachel has also gone through all of the 2010 USDF Sporthorse year end awards and pulled out the region 8 top 10 winners. We plan to use this for promotion and possibly put in the Tip with our NEDA awards.

I wrote the stallion auction front page of the tip article and the presidents message. Hopefully it will encourage a lot for this years activities and lots of bidding in the auction. We need it. This is our big fund raiser.

Handling Clinic 2011

We had to change the date to May 22nd due to the unavailable hotels for college graduations in RI. Elizabeth Preston is running the clinic. Everything is exactly the same as last year for low cost. This will make it easier for Elizabeth to run her first clinic too. We hope we can try the online sign up too if possible.

Breed Shows

A bit slow getting the NJ and NY breed shows we have listed in our series and participating in the Sweepstakes. I had one request for another breed show in NY asking if they can be part of us and start one for their area and be part of our NEDA Sweepstakes. Talking to them now to see where they are in distance to our other NY shows.

Mary Piro is interested in helping us get a breed show in VT. It is the only state we don't have a breed show. We want to get our VT breeders for our series. I asked Eliza Rutherford if she would be interested as she had a nice facility and she shows every year. She had concerns for parking of trailers, but is willing to help. Will continue to work on this. Probably will be next year. Mary is not familiar with the shows and wants to attend one to see how they are run.

All 3 of the previous Maine shows have opted not to have a show this year.

The new RI show will again be held at Brookside Equestrian Center.

Promotion

We have the stallion auction ad showing off the winner of the \$5400 Fall Show Breed Futurity. Kristin Grosso who is our new PR for Sporthorse specializes in marketing for her own job is helping to promote sporthorse for us. She will be creating a facebook page in January. I also gave her our zoomerang account so she can get the old sporthorse survey information. She will put together a new survey for sporthorse this year.

Spothorse Flyer

Don't have this updated yet as we are just getting the final list of breed shows. After January Tip is out, we'll work with Beth Robinson on the updates and get a printing to distribute for 2011. We also want to make sure the clinic for Young Horse with Christoph Hess is on there.

Sponsorship –

Phyllis Leblanc discussed sponsorship. Sponsorship is working on streamlining and refining the sponsorship offerings for 2011. We are planning a meeting with the event managers and all interested board members to gather suggestions and input. Tentatively, the meeting will be early in January on Sunday afternoon. It will be held at the Ayer facility where we are meeting this week (thank you Karin!). Date to be determined.

If you would like to attend that meeting and contribute your thoughts and suggestions please send me an email at Phyllis@harborsweets.com and I will let you know the date when it is confirmed. we will discuss advertising policy as part of our sponsorship meeting and make a proposal to the board at the next meeting.

Membership –

Deb Carr-Kirk discussed membership. There isn't much to report in membership at this time of year. The 2011 Member Packets are scheduled to be in the mail the second week of January. The 2011 OPL is proceeding nicely. At the meeting, Deb reported that we have approximately 1,420 members so far, slightly ahead of last year.

Education –

Angela Prenosil discussed education.

Fall Weekend 2010 – Jen should be sending a report.

Spring Symposium 2011 – Linda has been working hard on getting articles, demo and auditor applications complete for this FUNdamentals of Freestyles event for the Tip and the website. Apr30-May1 at Apple Knoll Farm. Terry Ciotti Gallo and Lois Yukins are both on board. We're really excited about this one!

Fall Symposium 2011 – Nov 5-6th with Kyra Kyrklund! Yup contract is signed and received – finally!

USDF Convention – first congrats to Beth! She won it with her fantastic speech.

Lots of networking, roundtable discussions were fantastic (eventually want to do something like that with NEDA Education), want to start a yahoo GMO Education group, might get on the adult programs committee if they need someone, attended adult programs, instructor trainer meetings, gmo committee meetings. Educational lectures were super this year – Dr. Hilary Clayton on the horse's back and Dr Jenny Susser on Riding with Confidence(very funny lady). Symposium on weekend was excellent, especially Sunday. Lilo Fore and Gary Rockwell made a great pair and worked well together – lots of info, took tons of notes.

New Business – want to build the Outreach programs grant fund. Plan to use funds from silent auctions and other fundraisers held at our educational events to do so. The grants will help other

GMOs and /or farms in our area start new educational programs in their immediate area, but are worried about their budgets especially the first time around, like a “toolbox symposium” developed by Karin Offield. Working with Carol Gordon to find a place to track this funds \$\$.

Also, NEDA (Education) needs to buy a screen and a portable sound system for our events this year and in future. (we are done with renting low quality equipment at every event) Paul Eason is looking into a wireless mic and speaker system and I will purchase a screen. Will put on next year’s budget (if possible) but need to buy asap, so Sally can use for “L” program. Will ask for board approval tonite.

At the meeting, the board discussed the proposals. There is excess money in the 2010 budget for this equipment if it can be done and recorded by the end of the year. After discussion, the board **VOTED** to approve the purchases of the new equipment.

One more thing, can someone on education have a NEDA CC that we can use to purchase and put deposits on items for our events – there are a ton of things that need this or do we ask the Pres or treasurer every time? We were thinking myself or Kate.....

At the meeting, Sue reported that she is looking into whether a NEDA credit card can be obtained, with the charging information disseminated to the coordinators for their use. If any erroneous charges show up, it will be shut off immediately. Sue feels that this will be a more flexible option than having individual credit cards for each coordinator. Sue will report back on this item at a future meeting.

Additional - Hoping to hear from Sally about “L” program, but from what she tells me everything is going great and we are at full capacity for the first three sessions at Cutler Farm.

Jen Dillon discussed the fall weekend.

2010 Fall Weekend Symposium Re-Cap

By all accounts, the 2010 FW was one of NEDA’s best fall symposiums. We overcame many hurdles and pulled it off, thanks to a lot of help from board members, volunteers, and all the symposium participants.

This year’s event included the use of Constant Contact’s Event Marketing to facilitate online registration, and in my opinion, it was a huge success. I believe that at least 60% of our registrations, including walk-ins, came through the online system. This meant earlier sign ups and less work chasing down funds. I think this system will only continue to improve and will assist us in reaching more people for advance registration.

The FW has gotten too big for us to easily manage and track with Excel. And with Kyra coming in 2011, I expect another block buster symposium. Beth Jenkins, Linda Mendenhall, and I are planning to move the symposium tracking into Access, a more powerful database than Excel.

Another new change at the fall symposium was the distribution of auditor packets in place of mailing tickets. This saved a lot of time for the auditor coordinators and saved money on postage. We had a great team of volunteers at the registration desk, and the check-in process went smoothly as well.

Along with the registration process, we moved to a written-receipt driven process for walk-ins where a pre-printed receipt was completed for every walk-in. This allowed us to more accurately track walk-ins and allocate cash, checks, and credit cards to lunch, admission, membership, etc.

Carol and I are continuing to sort the overall income, but the majority of expenses have been paid (with the exception of busing which is not on the recent report). The profit from FW is expected to be \$17,000 (not considering the banquet which I will report on next month).

2010 Attendance (Steffen & Shannon Peters)

607 different people attended (including volunteers)

384 on Friday
501 on Saturday
368 on Sunday

2009 Attendance (Hubertus Schmidt)

471 different people attended (not including volunteers)

294 on Friday
335 on Saturday
281 on Sunday

Package pricing was available to NEDA members only, and non-member pricing was increased in an effort to encourage non-members to purchase memberships. We collected over \$5,000 in membership dollars.

275 people attended all 3 days of this symposium. 113 came for 2 days. 269 came for just one day, and we sold 56 half-day slots (most of this was with walk-ins even though we published half-day options with pre-registration).

\$3,435 worth of coupons were used for the symposium, up from \$1860 last year. More Flextime Instructors came this year, and all were more vocal about expressing their thanks to NEDA for the option to use their admission coupon any day of the symposium (rather than only on Friday).

Refund Policy

I'd like to consider changing our policy on non-refundable tickets. We do have a non-refundable ticket policy written in very fine print on our auditor application. But given that we generally get very few requests for refunds, and not refunding simply causes "bad feelings," I'd like to change this policy slightly.

I'd like to say that there are no refunds AFTER the pre-registration deadline. That's generally 3 weeks prior to the event. This gives us time to make changes to seating and lunch arrangements if necessary. And I think we should issue refunds for auditing only (not food, i.e. lunches or banquet tickets). This also allows those who sign up early (which we want them to do), and then have unforeseeable conflicts (like work travel), to get a refund.

Banquet tickets should remain non-refundable. Period. Banquet tickets can be sold should a purchaser need to. And the banquet organizer and auditor coordinator(s) will not be brokers for this. Tickets purchased may be sold on the NEDA Bulletin Board or at the symposium.

Symposium Survey

One of the questions we ask in the symposium survey is if those that attended feel it is important for professionals to attend events like the spring/fall symposium. If answer is yes, we ask for suggestions to encourage their attendance. It's amazing the number of AAs that responded they either don't think it's important or that it's not "their business" to have an opinion. Also, if the AAs did feel professional attendance was important, they sided with the predominant professional viewpoint that it's too difficult to take the time away from their business to attend. Not sure if these means anything, but it was a common theme on the surveys so I thought it was worth mentioning.

Continuing Education –

Sally gave an update on the L program. Everything is going well, but the program has grown beyond all original expectations of numbers, and Sally is worried about the parking at Cutler. Sally will speak to Donna about it and make a decision this week. Sally would give us an update on this in the future.

Sally brought forth to the board the idea that NEDA should run a second part II of the L program in 2012 given that NEDA has almost twice as many people on the waiting list for Part II as are allowed in the program. Maine is thinking about doing a second Part II as well, for the same reason. Sally agreed to run it, if the board thought it would be a good thing for NEDA. Several board members asked Sally to confirm that NEDA would at least break even on the second Part II. After further discussion, the board **VOTED** to have NEDA run a second part II of the L program.

Public Relations –

Tracie Richardson discussed public relations.

TIP:

January TIP is just waiting for the stallion info/cover story and it will be sent to layout. February TIP will have the Spring Symposium for the cover story and information/stories from the USDF convention. Please let me know what else you would like in there. Spring Show article? Notice about new tests??

SALUTE:

I will have Ginette send an update on the picture selection and the ads, we do have an article from Lyndee for it.

ADVERTISING:

Arabella has it well in control and on budget. Please let us know if there are any publications we should revisit to advertise in for the coming year.

Scholarships

Sue Edelen confirmed that the application for the new scholarship period has been posted on the website.

New and Old Business

Sue McKeown and Paul Cormier brought up the fact that next year's USDF convention will be San Diego and will be more expensive. They asked the board to consider whether NEDA should give a stipend for the expenses of Region 8 delegates to attend if they are NEDA members (whether or not board members), or just use the budgeted amount for the expenses of the NEDA delegates? They asked the board to consider these things prior to the January budget meeting. If NEDA did offer a stipend for Region 8 delegates, should there be requirements to obtain the stipend? Such as the delegate being a NEDA member, agreeing to attend the whole convention (not just the BOG), agreeing to a certain number of volunteer hours with NEDA, membership at the time of the election as a delegate (as opposed to some later time), etc.