



PARAGRAPHS

Newsletter of United States Driving for the Disabled

Summer 2013

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Board of Trustees took June and July off because many of the Trustees were organizing and/or competing in events but August found them back at work and celebrating the recent clinic in New Jersey. Vice President Diane will tell you all about it. Several other clinics are in the planning stage with Maine, Arizona, Florida, and California as possible locations.

The clinics introduce persons with disabilities to driving as well as provide training opportunities for drivers who would love to be selected for Team USA. That selection process is complicated; Hardy Zantke's article in this issue of Paragraphs explains it for us, for which we are grateful.

We have often commented on our inability to send our own horses and equipment to the European venues of biannual international competition due to the exorbitant expense involved. While we continue to work to raise money to support the Team, we expect to borrow horses and equipment and compete at a slight disadvantage because of that necessity. We also expect to continue to support the international competition. Team USA will be at Sandringham, England in 2014 wearing red, white, and blue, sipping tea, and practicing their curtsies, just in case the Queen stops by. —Bev White ¶

TEAM USA

BY HARDY ZANTKE

Our President asked me to write about our next Team Selection:

I would really like to encourage **everybody** to get inspired and work towards such a goal to get on our next team and represent our country at the next World Championship, and if not the very next one, then one thereafter. They are held every two years. We really need you !!!!

However, we also need to be realistic and keep in mind what it takes to get there: That should not discourage anybody. After all, all you drivers with disabilities are showing the rest of us every day how you overcome obstacles to accomplish what you set out to do. So this is no different. There are obstacles to overcome, but then the goal can be reached. Others have done it before you, so **you** can do it too – and if not yet this time around for the next World Championship in Sandringham, England, June 27-29, 2014 – then perhaps for any one after that. But going to a World Championship to compete and represent your country isn't just a walk in the park, it does take some serious preparation and efforts. Here is what I think it takes:

1. You need to have a strong desire to accomplish the goal to get there and work hard to overcome all obstacles. There will be many. It's not going to be handed to you on a silver plate. Only **you** can make it happen.

2. You need to be a competitive and successful CDE driver here at home at regular ADS CDE's. Just having competed at a few lower level events isn't enough. The Para Driving World Championships are on the level of at least our ADS Intermediate Level CDE's. So you should be familiar and competent to compete successfully on that level. Work on building up your competitive record on such events as you'll need good show results for your application.

3. You need to have experience driving different horses and ponies as most likely you won't be able to compete overseas with your own animal unless you are wealthy or a very good fundraiser. (More on that below – see Item 5.)

4. You need to get to a "grader" to be classified into the proper "Grade" of your disability, to make sure that you are indeed disabled (enough) to qualify under the program for Para Equestrian international driving competitions. Details can be found on the website of the FEI – the organization which regulates international equestrian competitions www.fei.org.

continues on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 • The President's Corner
- 1 • Team USA
- 3 • Joy Adamski
- 3 • Blackhorse for Heroes
- 3 • Veteran's Salute Program
- 4 • Driving Clinic at Oak Run Farm

USDFD.ORG

MISSION AND PURPOSE

United States Driving for the Disabled, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, seeks to improve the lives of physically challenged individuals throughout the United States and Canada by providing the experience of driving horses in a safe and challenging environment.

Our mission is to provide the extraordinary benefit of therapeutic driving to as many people as possible through sharing knowledge, experience, and serving as a resource for innovations in adaptive equipment for drivers, trainers, and programs offering carriage driving.

The Sybil Dukehart Memorial Fund seeks to provide financial assistance to equip and train disabled drivers through providing scholarship funds to applicants.

USDFD fosters opportunities for drivers to compete in national and international amateur competitions by training and providing financial support for Team USA.

Articles and photos are welcome. Please include name and email address of author. Label photos with identification of subject and photo credit. High resolution digital files are preferred. Contact Office for additional instructions. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity and length.

TEAM USA ...

5. Now to the financial part: Unfortunately there is no organization to underwrite the cost. There is a little help from our National Federation USEF as well as USDFD and perhaps also a little from ADS, but none of this is much, as all also rely on **fundraising** from **all** it's members, which again, does include **you!** So, as always, the best helping hand is at the end of your own arm. I'm sorry that I don't have any better news, but that's just the way it is. So for the most part, you'll be on your own. So let's break it down into pieces that can be swallowed perhaps a little easier: What do you need to come up with?

a) The airfare for you and your navigator – and any other helpers whom you might want or need to take along. Figure about \$1,200-1,600 per person roundtrip to London, depending from where you come from in the USA. Yes, that's expensive (perhaps you can get some airmiles from somebody who flies a lot?), but didn't you all want to go on a trip to England for a change anyhow? So why not do your next vacation over there? Ah, speaking of vacation: Yes, you all need to figure that it will take your yearly vacation time for it anyhow, as you will want to arrive there a couple of weeks before the competition to get familiar with the animal you'll get to drive and work in the "training camp." So yup, it won't be a regular vacation, as you'll be expected to "work" in the training camp, but isn't driving your hobby? So wouldn't you rather do this than going on a cruise? So then, yes, together with the airfare for getting there, you'll need to figure also the expenses for food and housing that you, your navigator and support crew would usually spend on a couple of weeks vacation. Granted, everybody tries to keep that to a minimum, they'll try to find "cheap" housing, sometimes even donated, and likewise they'll try to not spend too much on food either, but of course, you all need to eat – but you would need to do that at home too. Next: You'd need local transportation to get around. So figure a rental car, which, depending on how many folks are in your group, perhaps can be shared with another driver. Depending on your disability you might need a local golf cart as well. So that's the basic: Anything you, your navigator and your own support folks would need for a couple of weeks driving vacation in England.

b) Now to the horse and carriage(s), harness and tack: As I wrote above, unless you are fairly well to do, or very good at fundraising, or have a wealthy friend or relative to help you along – it is prohibitively expensive to take your own along – and we only were able to do so a couple of times for one or the other driver. To fly a horse or pony from the USA to Europe and back, figure roughly \$15,000 roundtrip and to ship a carriage and tack can add another \$10,000 (and it's been a while since I have been involved, so these figures are probably a bit outdated, plus of course it also depends from where in the USA you are flying). So for the most part we have been relying on finding animals and equipment to borrow or lease in the host country. The cost for that has varied from being donated – with us just having to pay for local expenses, like getting them transported to the training camp and event site, plus feed & board there – to leasing them for a usually fairly reasonable amount. But let's not kid ourselves, it all adds up and that costs money too.

c) In addition the team needs to pay entry fees to attend the event and have a Chef d'Equipe and a Trainer along. Both need their airfare, room, board & local transportation there too. Usually they have donated their own time (and sometimes also part of their own expenses) but not always, so it depends whom we can get into those positions. Usually the funds we were able to get from USEF and USDFD have been able to cover these expenses.

So then, besides **training** and **competing** and **getting really good** at the sport with hopefully driving different animals, you need to think about fundraising and getting creative about it. A local bake sale isn't going to cut it (unless you are a REALLY good baker :-), but it's a start and every little bit helps.

We have had endless discussions not only at USDFD but also at our regular teams about the two different ways of fundraising. Ideally of course everybody should work as hard as possible in raising money for the **entire** team, and not only selfishly for her or himself, **but**, let's face it, your rich uncle Joe who might not have a clue about carriage driving might not care much about Team USA, but he might care about helping **you**, and the same might go for your local community, your local driving club, your dentist, your truck dealer, anybody whom you know, whose arm you could twist. So perhaps one can try to work on **both** angles. Any money raised for the entire team to USDFD can be tax-deductible, but then cannot be earmarked for you alone, but must go to the entire team. Any money that you can get directly to you of course would not be tax-deductible to anybody.

So I hope this gives you some general ideas, and again, I hope it does not turn anybody off as too hard. Unfortunately some years ago, I once did discourage a good candidate and after outlining these details, she withdrew, which was a real shame, as I knew, she would probably have done very well. That year we still did go with our largest team USA ever, with six drivers to the World Championship in Hopetoun, Scotland, did find horses and ponies and carriages to borrow for all of them, and did come home with one individual bronze medal. So yes, it can be done! Let's do it again next year for Sandringham!

We should have the official Selection Criteria out on the USEF Website sometimes early next year. We can't do it yet, as we'll have a new FEI Rule book as of Jan 1, 2014 for which we need to wait to change some of the references accordingly – but basically it should be fairly similar to the last one, which means, we can have a team of three drivers – one of which must be a Grade 1 driver, and we can be allowed a couple of additional individual entries.

You will need to be a member of USDFD, ADS, USEF and ultimately also be registered with the FEI. Once the Selection criteria is published by USEF, you'll need to file an application with them next spring including your competitive record. USEF will have a five member Selection committee, which will meet by conference call to review the applications and select the team with input from the coach, hopefully also as soon as possible next spring. All active drivers from USDFD who are interested to participate should indicate that to our USDFD V.P. Diane Kastama as soon as possible, and can name their choices for Coach, Chef d'Equipe and members of the Selection Committee, so that your wishes can be considered.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask me, or perhaps better yet, our Vice President of USDFD and former medalist Diane Kastama, who has been along on every team since 2002, so probably has the most experience of anybody that I can think of.

And to everybody else, who was kind enough to read this, please support Team USA with helping in fundraising and donating to USDFD as well as to the ADS, USPEA & USEF.

Thank you,

Hardy





Mark Morris driving Wilbur. Sara Schmitt coaching.



Lisa Miller driving Wilbur owned by Nearaway Farms, Sara Schmitt sitting next and Meg on the back step.

PARA-EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPING DRIVERS CLINIC

The Para-Equestrian Driving clinic held August 10-11 at Celtic Charms Therapeutic Horsemanship Center in Howell, NJ was a raging success. Two Para-Equestrians were Nationally classified. We had eight lessons on Saturday and seven on Sunday. We had nine participants over the course of the weekend. None of the drivers or potential drivers brought their own horses but we had the use of four

MORE PHOTOS NEXT PAGE

different horses/ponies to use for the weekend. Wilbur, a Halflinger, and his Glinkowski four-wheel carriage was loaned to the program by the Neuberg's at Nearaway Farms. Quackers, a Standardbred, and his Meadowbrook cart was loaned by Ellen Weisfeld and Mary Alice Goss. Misty, a Halflinger pony owned by Celtic Charms and Nancy Forsyth's Pacific Cart was also made available for our drivers. Clinician Sara Schmitt brought her own competition horse Savannah, a Friesian Saddlebred cross mare, to be used by our more advanced para-equestrians.



Valerie driving Misty with Nancy Forsyth.

A USEF classifier gave a talk on Saturday about the whole classification system and how it was designed to level the playing field when the disabled compete against each other or in open competition. She then classified two drivers while we started pairing drivers with horses and carriages. A cones course of 10 FEI cones was setup by Sara, Nancy, and wonderful volunteers. Sara then worked with each driver on steering accurately through the cones, focusing on getting the horses to go forward and straight. Ann Miles worked with many of our beginning drivers on the basics of driving straight. They followed Josh, a young man that jogged the cones course in front of them. Sunday the drivers were introduced to a hazard and another cones course. The beginners drove gates A,B,C and the more advanced drove A,B,C,D. Sara Schmitt and para-equestrian Diane Kastama discussed how to drive hazards taking into consideration one's ability to turn left or right, depending on one's disability. Then the participants were once again paired with horses and carriages and got to try the hazard on their own, along with a new cones course set up that morning. Everyone enjoyed watching the participants negotiate the hazard.

The clinic was very successful. We have four para-equestrian riders who are hooked on driving and want to continue to pursue the sport of Combined Driving. Our most advanced driver worked on her cones and hazard skills to help her in open competition at the intermediate level. Many drivers were enthused by experiencing the speed they and their horse can drive; they plan to continue their instruction at Celtic Charms Therapeutic Horsemanship Center.

Many thanks to the United States Para Equestrian Association,, the United States Equestrian Federation, Sara Schmitt, and Celtic Charms Therapeutic Horsemanship Center, and thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers for making this free USDFD Para-Equestrian Developing Drivers clinic a great success. 🇺🇸

THANK YOU!

Donations:

Pacific Region Driven Dressage Festival

Bryce Thompson Foundation

United States Para-Equestrian Association

United States Equestrian Foundation

Laurie Landeau Foundation LLC

Wanda Walker

The CDE at Inavale

In-Kind Donations:

Sara Schmidt

Nancy Forsyth

Ann Miles – The Carriage Barn

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Horsemanship

Ricki Neuberg – Nearaway Farms

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Debbie, Josh, Erica, Charles Todd

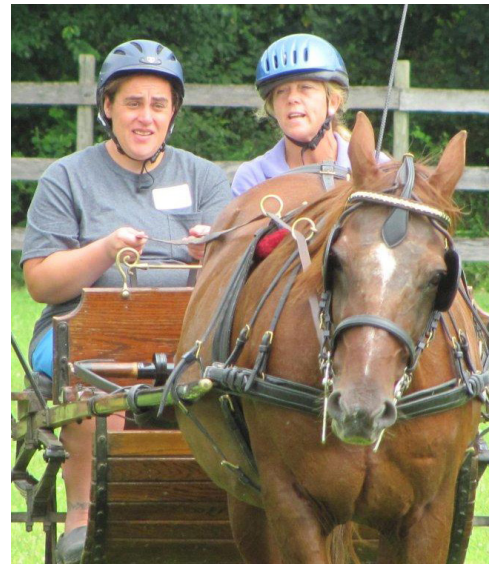
Mark Morris

Dolores Cutler

Becky Olson

Beth Bickerton

PARA-EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPING DRIVERS CLINIC ...



Above: Karen driving Misty with Becky Olsen. Right: Alice Baird driving Quackers.



Above: Boo Fitch driving Wilbur, Sara Schmitt on back step.
Below: Maryan Amarol driving Quackers a Standardbred owned by Ellen Weisfeld and Sara Schmitt sitting next to Maryan.



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Alice Briard from Howell, NJ ...Individual
Maryan Amaral from Newton, MA ...Individual
Wanda Walker from Washougal, WA ...Family plus \$50 donation to Team USA



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