

Introducing the Piaffe/Passage

Focus on Fun and Relaxation

“Start them young so it’s no big deal,” advised Caryn Vesperman at the Southwest Chapter demonstration on Monday, Nov. 9. She was referring to starting horses at ages 5-6 with the preliminary work for piaffe and passage.

Caryn outlined the steps of in-hand work from the introductory responses to half-steps to under saddle work. Several times she cautioned that this work can’t be rushed or forced. “I want my horses to think this is a fun and rewarding game.”

Introductory Step

Start with a surcingles and side reins. You also can braid and roll up your horse’s tail so it is out of the way for this work.

“The side reins should be very loose,” said Caryn. “They are not to be used to force the horse’s head into a position, but set some broad limits so the horse stays round over the top line instead of inverting his back if he raises his head during the work.”

Continued on next page



Caryn Vesperman demonstrates with her horse, Diamond Dureza (a.k.a. Zeza). Here she shows the adjustment of side reins, a surcingles over the saddle with the tail braided, rolled up and secured with VetWrap. (Note: for introductory work, only a surcingles with side reins needs to be used. The saddle comes later.)



Caryn on Zeza talking to WDCTA members and guests about introducing a horse to in-hand work for the future goals of piaffe and passage.

Focus...continued

The surcingle is used when you first work the horse in-hand. The saddle is only necessary when the session incorporates both the in-hand and under saddle work.

The only other tool you need to start this work is a bamboo pole. (Hint: Go to a store that sells garden supplies and buy a pack of bamboo tomato stakes that are at least 5-feet long and 1/4" to 1/2" in diameter.) Bamboo poles are less flexible than lunge or in-hand whips, so the handler is better able to control the direction and touch.

Place your horse parallel to the wall so he doesn't swing his haunches away from you. Put the reins over the horse's neck like you would if you were in the saddle. With one hand, you hold the reins on the side of the neck and with the other hand, the bamboo pole. Stand at your horse's shoulder so you're well out of the way of getting kicked. At the beginning, start with the hind legs. The horse should stand and just lift the inside hind leg that you're touching with the pole. Then touch the other hind leg. Eventually you want the horse not to just pick up the hind leg, but hold it up for a while. Be persistent with the tapping and try different parts of the leg to find the spot(s) the horse responds to best. If the horse kicks out in annoyance at the pole, don't get worried, irritated or mad—it's a natural response. If the horse walks forward and past you, halt him or turn him in a circle and try again. He is not allowed to run past or over you. Don't lose your patience. Remember, the horse must stand in one place. Then switch sides by turning the horse around to face the other direction and repeat.

Next Intro Exercises

Once this is confirmed (which may take several sessions), ask the horse to take a step forward and tap the hind leg as it comes forward so the step is exaggerated. Repeat in the other direction.

Once the horse understands what to do with the hind legs, switch to the front legs. Be sure to stand away from the shoulder so you're not accidentally struck by your horse's leg when he lifts it in response to the touch. "Don't worry if your horse paws or stomps his foot in response," said Caryn. "Just stay patient and repeat your request." Once the horse understands what to do with one leg, reach farther and tap the other front leg. Then turn the horse to face the other direction and repeat.

Throughout this work, reward even the smallest effort with an occasional sugar. "This work should be fun and not stressful for the horse," said Caryn. "It doesn't matter if this phase takes weeks or months because it's the foundation for the next stage."

Half-Steps

The next stage involves half-steps. This is where the handler walks backwards and, with an in-hand whip, requests the horse advances slightly and takes quick and short steps with its hind legs.

(Three photos below) Caryn demonstrates with Zeza how the horse should lift and hold the legs in response to the touch.



Continued on next page

Focus...continued

This is also the step where riders new to this should seek help from someone trained in this work. This is also where the expert can determine whether the horse might benefit from doing work in long lines.

Work Under Saddle

Once the horse is comfortable with half-steps in both directions, it's time to start work with the rider in the saddle and a handler on the ground.

"This is also a phase where the handler's expertise is critical because the handler has to know the timing of when and where to touch the horse," explained Caryn. "The handler has to know when they can influence the lift of the leg or whether to touch the top of the croup, hock, stifle or buttocks to affect the horse. It isn't just waving the whip at the horse indiscriminately."

At first the rider just sits quietly and doesn't do much so the horse can just listen to the handler and get the idea of what to do with the added weight on its back. As the work continues and the horse grows confident, the rider starts requesting "baby" piaffe steps and eventually some preliminary passage steps. As the horse progresses, in addition to touching the horse's hind legs, the handler also will start touching the horse's front legs (usually with the bamboo pole), and, at times, *both* the front and hind legs, depending upon what the horse needs to understand what's being requested. The expertise and timing of the ground person is critical in this phase, which can take months, even years. The point is: this work should not be rushed. Both strength and confidence for the work must be developed.

Eventually, with the ground person nearby, the rider begins requesting piaffe and passage on her own. "This is by no means what is expected at Intermediare II or Grand Prix," explained Caryn. "It takes years for the horse to develop the strength to lift and hold for these movements and maintain thoroughness and suppleness without negative tension. Think how long it would take a person to develop the strength to squat and rock from one leg to another, as in the piaffe, and then squat and push forward, as in the passage—and do this around the arena several times...with weights on your back! That's why I say if someone tells you he or she can put the piaffe on your horse in six months, run away as fast as you can!"

As always with horses, be careful and work with an experienced trainer.



(Above) Caryn works regularly with Claudio Oliveira in Florida for her in-hand work, but in his absence, Marie Caldwell (who has started this work with her horse), was game enough to pick up the in-hand whip and walk alongside during the demo, in the role of the ground person.

(Below) Zeza shows the early stages of passage without a ground person. At this point in the training, a horse, including Zeza, should not be asked for full power in the passage because the horse still needs to develop more strength to maintain relaxation over the back and keep their hocks underneath instead of pushing out behind with an upside-down back. If asked for too much at this stage, the horse will lose the thoroughness and softness over the top line, and then the movement will have been created out of tension and possibly even force.



UP Chapter Reaches Out

By Kathy Caspary

The UP Chapter had an enjoyable afternoon Sept. 30 with other Yoopers at Roberta Coppler's Farm near Alston, MI. She graciously arranged an afternoon of demonstrations, tack sales and group information tables. We had a WDCTA info table with membership applications, English and Western dressage tests, and a few photos of chapter activities. We were able to connect with fellow horse enthusiasts and get some of their contact information.

Dana Hongisto helped our cause by doing a lovely Grand Prix demo on her horse, The Prophet, and having a training question-and-answer session.

At the end of the day, we gave away a beautiful plant and gift certificate to a local feed store to one of our new contacts. We're looking forward to attending this same event next year.





Caryn Vesperman Editor

All advertisements, articles and photographs (with photo release) should be submitted by the 15th of the preceding month of publication, unless you make prior arrangements for additional time.

Calendar of events will appear in both the eQuester and on the WDCTA website.

Payment for advertisements should be submitted via PayPal through the WDCTA website (wdcta.org) or mailed with a check made out to WDCTA and mailed to the editor.

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Brooklyn, WI 53521
newsletter@wdcta.org



Changes May Be Coming

For the last few years, WDCTA's state board has been preparing for the changing reality many non-profit organizations are facing—lack of volunteers. This became more evident with the pandemic when people really started cloistering themselves.

That's why your state board began making changes to our bylaws a few years ago (which you, our members, voted to approve). These changes made it easier for WDCTA to adapt to a changing environment. We can operate as an entity with just the state board and no chapters (as IDCTA does in Illinois) or as a state board with one or multiple chapters. These changes allow us to be flexible and remain viable.

Over the next few weeks, chapters will be meeting and voting to continue as they have or stop operating as a chapter. (Several have expressed at state board meetings that they do not have enough volunteers to fill the chapter's slate of officers.)

This does **not** mean that the entire organization is being disbanded—far from it. What it means is that if there are chapters remaining, they will continue to have influence through discussion and votes at the state board level. Those in a region that are no longer represented by a chapter will have representation on the state board through the Member-at-Large

positions. In addition, any member or group of members who have an idea for an event or activity could make a presentation to the state board, if they are requesting funding. Area members can still get together for educational gatherings (and if a horse is involved, still obtain insurance coverage for the activity).

WDCTA's state board is committed to representing our members at the local level and with the USDF. WDCTA is a USDF charter member (meaning, we were one of the few at the ground level of the creation of the USDF), and we take that heritage and responsibility seriously.

So when you hear talk about a chapter "dissolving," don't worry. WDCTA is solid in its finances and commitment to you, our members, and the disciplines of dressage and eventing.

Caryn

*"There are far better things ahead
than any we leave behind."*

C.S. Lewis



Southwest Chapter members gathered recently after a demo and enjoyed a potluck dinner and a warm fire during their meeting.

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Calendar

WDCTA Events

TBD

Other Events

Nov. 9-12

2023 US Dressage Finals

Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, KY

2024

Sept. 12-15

Region 2 Championships

Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, KY

Region 4 Championships

National Equestrian Center,
St. Louis, MO

Deadline for Submitting Records for WDCTA Year-End Awards: Nov. 30

Report form on the next page of this newsletter, plus below are links to the forms on the WDCTA website:

Traditional Dressage:

[https://www.wdcta.org/2023_forms/
Dressage_Score_Report_23.pdf](https://www.wdcta.org/2023_forms/Dressage_Score_Report_23.pdf)

Western Dressage:

[https://www.wdcta.org/2023_forms/
Western_Dressage_Score_Report_23.pdf](https://www.wdcta.org/2023_forms/Western_Dressage_Score_Report_23.pdf)

Eventing:

[https://www.wdcta.org/2023_forms/
Eventing_Score_Report_23.pdf](https://www.wdcta.org/2023_forms/Eventing_Score_Report_23.pdf)



WDCTA Dressage and In-Hand Score Report Form

One Level, One Horse and Rider Combination per Form.

All Scores must be postmarked no later than November 30.

Send good quality copies of your tests or a USDF/USEF score print-out along with this form.

Rider _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Horse's Name _____

Owner _____

RULES (Please read complete WDCTA Championship Rules on WDCTA website.)

1. Both owner and rider must be current WDCTA members at time scores are earned for awards. Exception: For in-hand classes, the handler does not need to be a WDCTA member, nor is it necessary to have the same handler for each class in order to qualify for year-end awards.
2. Dressage Awards: Three scores by three different judges from two different shows.
3. In-Hand Awards: Two scores from two different judges from two different shows.
4. Dressage Awards: At least two qualifying scores submitted must be from a USEF/USDF-recognized show.
5. Each score must be a minimum of 60% at Training - 4th level and a minimum of 58% at PSG and above.
6. Scores must be earned at shows, open to all breeds.
7. At least one qualifying score submitted must be from WDCTA- or USEF/USDF-recognized show held in Wisconsin.
8. One test score must be from the highest test from the level.
9. Maiden division awards may be from any test from the level.
10. WDCTA has a 70 Percent Club award for those members that have received a 70% or higher at a WDCTA-sanctioned schooling show or USDF/USEA-recognized show, during the awards year. WDCTA will award a certificate to the rider. There is no fee for the 70% Club.

Scores must be postmarked on or before November 30. Scores may be submitted via email; a reply will be sent indicating your results were received. Scores may also be sent through the U.S. Postal Service. If you want notification that the awards chair received your scores when sent through the postal service, please include a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your score sheets.

Circle Division: Open Adult Amateur Junior/Young Rider Maiden 70% Club (free)
Eligible for a Maiden Award at this level? (Circle one) Yes No

Show Name and Date	Level and Test	Judge(s)	Score %

Average Score _____ %

Mail or email *Score Report Form* and *copies of the tests or USDF/USEA Score report* to:

Joann Williams
W3580 Scotch Bush Rd
Elkhorn, WI 53121-3302

Phone: 414-378-2231
Email: awards@wdcta.org

Member Listings

INSTRUCTORS

Jackie Luebke-Puetz
15034 Co. Rd. X
Kiel, WI 53042-9706
cvestor@aol.com
(920) 693-3367

Will teach through 2nd Level, earned USDF Bronze medal, trained through 4th Level. Served in the past on U&SDF education committee, USEF steward. Will travel.

Megan McIsaac
Lindinhof Equine Sports Zentrum
4246 Schneider Drive
Oregon, WI 53575
lindinhofllc@gmail.com
(608) 445-8531
lindinhof.com

FEI trainer, USDF-certified instructor through 4th Level, 2014 national champion with Kingsley, USDF Gold, Silver, Bronze medalist, all USDF bars. Competed four horses at GP. Competed successfully at Dressage at Devon and West Coast Festival. Year-end USDF/USEF and WDCTA awards. 16+ years teaching experience. Students competed through GP, earned riding awards and medals. Travel for lessons and clinics.

Raul Vadillo Roa
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Tempel Lipizzans is a Lipizzan breeding and full-time dressage training facility, located in northern Illinois, just an hour from Chicago or Milwaukee.

Andrea Schten
W350S6890 Ulrickson Road
Eagle, WI 53119
(262) 470-4557
aschten@hotmail.com
andreaschten.com

USDF Bronze, Silver and Gold medalist. Qualified for regional championships: Training through Grand Prix on self-trained horses. Multiple students have earned Bronze and Silver medals. School-masters available. Trailing in for lessons welcome. Available for clinics. Will travel for lessons.

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katherinevansicklen@gmail.com
(608) 669-0148

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- ___ Clinic or Event
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- ___ USDF ___ USEF
- ___ USEA
- ___ Pony Club
- ___ Facebook
- ___ Current WDCTA member (name) _____
- ___ Web Search
- ___ Other _____

*** Would you like to receive other horse-related mailings that are not affiliated with WDCTA? **YES NO**

DISCIPLINES:

- ___ Dressage
- ___ Eventing
- ___ Breeder
- ___ OTHER

RIDER STATUS:

- ___ Professional
- ___ Adult Amateur
- ___ Young Rider (*age 18-21)
- ___ Junior Rider (*age 17 or less)

* Age as of January 1

CHAPTER AFFILIATION:

- ___ Southwest (SW Wisconsin, Madison and surrounding area)
- ___ Upper Peninsula (Upper Michigan and northern WI)
- ___ Central (Portage, Green Bay, Stevens Point, and central area)
- ___ Kettle Moraine (Milwaukee, Sheboygan, FDL and southeast WI)
- ___ General Member (No chapter designation)

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION AND FEES

\$164 BUSINESS Membership – Includes one USDF Group membership; emailed newsletter; one voting privilege; recognition & business card ad in **eQuester**, listing & logo on WDCTA website. Also, **INCLUDES** Stable, Instructor, Breeder & Business listings (choose one or all four) in both eQuester & website.

\$64 FAMILY Membership - Includes one USDF group membership; emailed newsletter; two voting privileges. USDF requires that an additional USDF membership be purchased for each additional family member. Add \$10 for each additional family member.

\$10 Add'l family member name _____ Birth date if age 21 or less _____

\$10 Add'l family member name _____ Birth date if age 21 or less _____

\$52 INDIVIDUAL Membership (Age 18 & over) . Includes one USDF group membership; emailed newsletter; one voting privilege.

\$39 JUNIOR Membership -- Birth date _____ (must be age 17 or less as of January 1st. Do not use in conjunction with a Family Membership. Includes one USDF group membership; emailed newsletter; one voting privilege.

\$42 NEW MEMBERS ONLY (not a member in the previous year), **JUNE MEMBERSHIP** -- joining after June 1st. Includes USDF group membership.

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Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

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- \$10 Business listing
- \$35 for all four listings

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