



Area 1 News

Optimum Minutes



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Daniel Stewart, 2014 Keynote Speaker

*HEAR YE! HEAR YE!
You are invited ...*

BY SUZANNE ADAMS

For all ye Area 1 fellow Eventers, you are cordially invited to attend the 2014 USEA Area 1 Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet on Sunday, January 12, 2014 from noon to 4pm (Organizers Meeting begins at 10am).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2014

Clarion Hotel and Conference Center
#1 Atwood Drive, Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: (413) 586-1211

This year's event should be spectacular! Come find out what makes our Area great, catch exciting news and updates. Share a bit of food and drink with your Eventing Buddies (remember, it's a long winter before we get to do the same at a Competitor's Party!)

And shhhh, don't tell anyone but the Silent Auction is filled with great items, like entries to the best events, gift cards, tack, sports tickets and so much more. Plan your strategy now. Eventing is an extreme sport and as competitors, the Auction can get a little intense!

Ok, we all love a good competition, could there be more? Yes! The Keynote Speaker is the fabulous Daniel Stewart. From his website:

Daniel Stewart has been a successful international trainer and instructor for over 25 years. In addition to the US, he's trained riders in Spain, Portugal, Canada, Mexico, Belgium, United Arab Emirates, Greece and the West Indies. From 2000 to 2006 he coached riders on several US Equestrian Teams to success at World Championships, World Equestrian Games and Olympics. As the internationally acclaimed author of "Pressure Proof Your Riding" and "Ride Right" he's widely considered one of the world's leading experts

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE OF OM

Unsung Heroes: The Event Secretary
USEA Convention - 2013
Dressage Tips for Eventers
A Trip To The AECs

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AREA 1 ANNUAL MEETING (continued)

on equestrian sport psychology, biomechanics, and athletics. He teaches clinics and seminars to thousands of riders each year and is a popular guest speaker at many national and international equestrian conventions.

Having ridden at one of his clinics this summer, his talks were interesting, humorous and offered great tips to improve a rider's focus and thus, improve performance. This is a talk you will not want to miss! It may provide you with practical tasks to work on this winter and a jump start to your 2014 Competition Goals.

So, let's summarize.... food, drink, friends, news, a competitive environment, prizes, a fantastic speaker... hmmm, what more could there be? What? There is more!

Yes! It is our Annual Meeting and AWARDS Banquet! That's right! We will also be celebrating our 2013 achievements! Come on out and cheer everyone on!

HURRY UP! REGISTER NOW!

You can download the registration form and agenda from Area 1 website.



Unsung Heroes: The Event Secretary Q&A with Erin Keehan

By KC DiCOSTANZO

1. How did you get involved in eventing, and thus become an event secretary?

The funny thing is that I'm too chicken to attempt eventing...I'm actually a dressage rider. I figure I'm such a klutz on my own, adding a flying horse and hard obstacles is just a recipe for disaster. However, I love the eventing community...they've been so open and friendly which makes being at the events such a joy. I was a manager of a dressage show for a few years and it was definitely not as much fun. So, having said that, back to the question at hand...it all started at a dressage show...

In my last year of my undergraduate studies, the trainer I was riding with at college was friends with some of the people organizing Dressage at Saratoga (DAS). She hooked me up with them and my first volunteering experience was as a dressage steward. Another member of that organizing committee became the president of the hosting organization, the Eastern New York Dressage and Combined Training Association (ENYDCTA). She was impressed with my enthusiasm for the sport and knew I had volunteered at DAS so she asked if I would be interested in being a fence judge at the Cobleskill Horse Trials (also hosted by ENYDCTA). I had no clue what a fence judge was but I was willing to give it a shot. Thankfully it was a nice weather year that first time or things might have been different.

I became hooked, and the following year I organized the fence judges (and it rained like a monsoon), but it was still a lot of fun. The next few years saw me getting more involved in both the dressage and eventing shows hosted by ENYDCTA. For the horse trials, in addition

to the fence judges, I oversaw the course decoration, solicited sponsors and advertisers, assisted with course prep and wherever else there was a need. Then SUNY Cobleskill, where the event was held, decided to erect a cow barn in the middle of the XC course and it was off to a new location for the event. Most competitors now know the event as the Old Chatham Horse Trials. Our second year found us without a secretary. A couple of people approached me about it...I was organized, computer savvy, and they knew I was a good worker...so again, I thought what the heck, it sounded like fun.

All I have to say is thank the powers that be for three very supportive and helpful people or again, things would be very different. Sharyn Cataldo-Antico gave me a lot of pointers on what the position entailed, providing me some material she had gathered and directing me to USEA's website; Margie Hutchison, then organizer of the event, was helpful when it came to technical questions, identifying competitors, and just being an ear when things got weird/hectic/or just plain crazy; and lastly, Eileen Pritchard-Bryan, the TD at that first event. She got me through that event but I'm not sure how...

Everything leading up to that first event went fairly smoothly, but then came the scheduling, oh and competitor packets, and the emails to change times, and on and on...and the fact that I didn't realize I needed to be there by course opening, or fully comprehend how long it really takes to stuff sponsorship materials in competitor bags, or how much space they would take up, and various and asunder small details that they just don't cover in any manuals. After nearly having a nervous

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UNSUNG HEROES (continued)

break-down once I did arrive at the event, things actually went really well the rest of the weekend. Or, maybe I just blocked it out...but in any case, it must have been good because I came back the next year and thereafter.

I wanted to do more scribing but at that time there weren't many dressage shows in my area. Someone (I think Margie) suggested I contact the horse trials as they were always looking for volunteers. Thinking that I probably didn't have a chance of getting a spot, I was surprised to learn that every event I contacted definitely wanted me to come. Those early years included scribing (and occasionally fence judging) at many Area 1 events including Over the Walls, Millbrook, Fitch's Corners, Kent, King Oak Farm, pretty much any event within a 2 hour radius of my home.

I started to get to know the competitors, the organizers, was assisting Gillian Perry at Kent horse trials, when a couple of people who were looking to start events asked me about being the secretary for their shows. My first events as secretary outside of Old Chatham were Great Vista and Riga Meadow. From there it just grew...King Oak one year (now the official scorer), Town Hill a couple of times (now official scorer), Stoneleigh-Burnham, Kent (took over when Gillian retired), as well as my original shows, Old Chatham, Great Vista, Riga Meadow, and the last few years adding Course Brook into the mix and assisting at Larkin' Hill.

2. What's the most rewarding thing about being a secretary, and the hardest?

The competitors.

Ok, let me explain...I love being out in the horse community and the eventing community has been the most welcoming I've experienced. I like meeting new people, chatting about horses, watching as competitors progress through the levels, sharing in their triumphs and empathizing with their set-backs. Helping newbies wade their way through the entry process or talking with returnees about the pre-show jitters. In some ways I ride vicariously through them. It's just fascinating in so many ways and after so many years, I feel like they are my extended family.

Competitors are also the hardest part (but luckily this pertains to a very small percentage)...rudeness is never fun to deal with but occasionally it happens. It's that trying to stay positive and cheery when you actually want to let someone have it. Thankfully it doesn't happen much.

As crazy as my friends think I am, I actually do love doing

this (sometimes not the early hours but, hey, you can't have everything).

3. How do divisions get split up when times are assigned? For example, do you look at the rider's age, experience of the horse, or is there another element involved before choosing which division they are best suited?

There is no hard and fast rule about how divisions get split. Some events will list in their prize list each division available (ie – a rider division, a horse division, or what I commonly see is just a plain open division and some may also list separate Jr/Yr divisions). Open divisions give the secretary/organizer more latitude for scheduling than the more restrictive rider or horse divisions. Sometimes the prize list doesn't specifically mention "Open", it'll just be the division code (ie – N for Novice). The competitor is supposed to include more specific information in the eligibility section of the form (near the top). Competitors should reference the USEF Rules for Eventing, Appendix 3 for definitions. Other events let the program do the scheduling, which is random.

As to how I separate divisions, when not specifically indicated in the prize list, depends on the entries for the divisions. I know people like to compete against others of similar caliber or age. So, I usually look to see how the age breakout is for each division. If I have enough to create a Jr/Yr or a "Masters" division, I'll do that first (especially the Jr/Yrs). More times than not, I have at least one division of Jr/Yrs. Then I look at the competitor's eligibility selections and I try to group them based on that information (I look at those that have indicated open (usually professionals) or if there are enough "horse" selections to create that division). As a last resort, and especially when they haven't included the eligibility information, I go with what I know (or don't know) about them – the educated guess. At any one event there could be any combination of the above criteria applied. My goal is to be fair to one and all.

A note to competitors...my events are relatively small compared to some other events. Scheduling can be a logistical nightmare and definitely the part that takes the longest. The time to make a special request (or to note you can't ride under a certain judge because of a conflict

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EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2013

ALL Beginner Novice riders must have a USEA ID number. ID numbers do not require membership and can be created by going to the USEA home page and clicking on Online Services. Click "New User?" to create profile. **APPLICATION (pdf)**

UNSUNG HEROES (continued)

of interest) is when you send your entry in and not when your times have been sent. I know most secretaries will attempt to accommodate requests, but this is not always possible.

4. How many hours (on average) does it take to receive entries, organize times, and finish your secretary duties? Does the size or magnitude of the event change the amount of work involved?

I can't say there is any "average" time. When I first started this it took forever because I had to manually enter in all the information from the entry. Now, however, I have a lot of data so entering may only take a few seconds. Also, the availability of electronic entries has decreased the amount of time it takes to receive entries...you just click a few buttons and viola, they're downloaded. It also depends on what software you are using, how fast you type, how legible the entry is, etc.

Early on in the process, it takes very little time. I have to set up the event in the program and then wait for opening day. Entries begin to trickle in and then increase as the closing day gets closer. The greatest proportion of time is setting the schedule. Because competitors are waiting to enter events until the last moment, this usually means putting it off to the last possible moment so as to accommodate as many competitors as possible.

The key to making everything work is organization, from the moment the show is set up to the final reports being

sent to the national organizations. The size of the event does play a part in how long it may take to do some things, like the scheduling for instance. However, another factor affects time more directly, and that is what levels are being offered. Up to Training, the paperwork is fairly straightforward but once Prelim is introduced, now you are dealing not only with USEA, but also USEF. Adding in championships or FEI to the mix and it's an even bigger time commitment. Knowing the rules, membership requirements and having a good team will definitely help keep you sane.

5. As competitors, what can we do to make your job easier?

One of the easiest things a competitor can do that not only makes the secretary's job easier, but their check-in as well, is to have all your documentation in by closing. For those that enter electronically, don't forget to send the signature page and Coggins. Double check your entry confirmations, because after all secretaries are human, too. Lastly, be patient and polite to the staff, many of whom are volunteers. Sometimes there are things going on like inclement weather or an accident, that may be stressing the event organizers. In the end, everyone is working to put on the best event they can and ensure that not only the competitors but the spectators as well are all safe and enjoying themselves. Despite what some may think, hosting an event is not a profit-gaining venture...it's for the love of the sport that we keep doing this year after year.



USEA CONVENTION - 2013

Our area may be small, but our dedication and commitment to Eventing was demonstrated over and over again at the USEA Year End Appreciation Awards presented Saturday, December 7, 2013 at the USEA Convention in Cincinnati.

Congratulations to all Area 1 members who were presented with awards!

President's Lifetime Achievement Award: Kyra Stuart

Governors Cup: Michelle Brochu

Andrew H. Popiel Memorial Trophy: Fernanda Kellogg

Cornerstone Instructors Award: Michelle Brochu, Jocelyn Hawe, John Bourgoin

Groom Awards: Amateur-Roger Demers; Professional-Martine Sandoval

Vintage Cup: Rick Caldwell

SmartPak Equine, Stackhouse, and Fleeceworks

Classic Series Sweepstakes:

Fleeceworks: P3D-Jocelyn Hawe

Stackhouse: P3D-Jocelyn Hawe

SmartPak: P3D-Jocelyn Hawe

Right: Roger Demers
Below: Jocelyn Hawe



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE: DRESSAGE TIPS FOR EVENTERS

BY VIRGINIA LEARY WITH KC DiCOSTANZO

Virginia Leary's name is a familiar one among the event scene. For many years she was an upper level eventer herself, claiming placings at Advanced and Intermediate level national championships and she was a member of the 4th place team at the Bromont Mini Olympics in 1975. She coached riders up through the Advanced level, including at world championship selection trials and the Pan Am Games. Virginia now rides at the FEI dressage level and judges at several Area I events. She is based at her own Lost Run Farm in Litchfield, CT, and offers lessons, clinics and training.

Over the next several issues of Optimum Minutes, Virginia has graciously agreed to share some tips and ways to improve your dressage from the standpoint of a former eventer, and now well-sought-after coach and judge. This installment discusses training tips and ideas for the winter months. Take it away, Virginia!

When event and show season is over, it's nice to not worry about competing and train for the following year. Of course the lucky thing to do is go some place warm to train, but we can't all do that!

The next best thing is to be able to work indoors with a good trainer. But for many of my eventing years I had no indoor and it was before everyone headed south, so here are some ideas.

I was lucky to have friends with indoors and I trucked there once or twice a week. We did a lot of hacking on hills especially on the roads after a fresh snow. You can leg yield, ask for a shoulder-in, haunches-in, and half-pass on a nice dirt road. Practice your turn on the forehand and turn on the haunches.

Even on frozen ground, you can get your horse listening by working and explaining what you want in the walk work on the elements of a perfect turn on the haunches. That requires shoulder-fore. Try practicing haunches-in and moving the forehand around in a circle.

Rein back requires a level of submission too. If you have trouble with these pieces, do them with your horse from the ground. My horses all shoulder-in, half-pass, rein back and piaffe from the ground. It's a whole lot easier when they are trained like that!

Working from the ground can really improve your relationship with your horse. He should walk briskly next to you when you lead him. Start and halt, watching your footwork. Walk your horse in a bridle with you holding the reins as if you are riding softly and on the bit. If your horse drags you around on the ground, he will drag you around on his back.

Teach him something and open his mind to learning. It's fascinating to watch a horse's face as they start to learn in hand. It can open a whole new way with your horse. Enjoy the winter months!



A TRIP TO THE AECs

Two great stories, among a hundreds more untold, of young eventers living the dream of competing at the American Eventing Championships and the folks that loved and supported them in their journey.

The American Eventing Championships - One Story!

By SUZANNE ADAMS

What impressed me most talking to Catherine Meehan was her calm determination and commitment to make her dream of competing at the American Eventing Championships come true, no matter what. Here's her story....

Catherine full leases her partner, Mustang Molly, an eight year old 14.2 hand mustang from Dawn Dascomb of Green Acres Stable in Madbury, NH. Oh wait, before I go on - Molly isn't just a mustang, but a mustang that lived wild until she was captured at 3.

It wasn't easy to get there and the road traveled was a bumpy one filled with challenges. "We had a rough couple of years after a successful 2011. In 2012, we couldn't even get out of the start box. We worked hard but kept getting eliminated. People started suggesting that maybe she wasn't cut out for eventing, maybe she should be retired and that maybe she should be sold. And then I broke my ankle which ended our 2012 season. I had to sit out and dream of our next season."

Catherine became determined to go to the AECs. "I wanted to show people what we could do and that we could do this!"

"In 2013, we started the season well until I dislocated my knee at school. I had to sit out the summer." Her determination drove her training in August and September. With help from her trainer, Dawn Dascomb, she knew that they were ready for the "Nationals."

Her best memories made me smile - a true eventer. She loved getting out there on course, galloping over the

open territory of the Texas Rose Horse Park and being on the same grounds and riding with Olympians... "all of us competing at the nationals." It really hit her, during her Stadium Jumping round, that she was doing something special - "This was the Nationals!"

Catherine talked of the teamwork from everyone at Green Acres - the two dads who drove the horses down to Texas, her fellow riders - Taylor Phoenix and Hannah Salmon. "We did everything together and helped each other out." And she was very grateful that her trainer, Dawn Dascomb, was there to help her out.

"The AEC's were awesome, so much fun. It was a great experience to ride in the Nationals. My advice to everyone, if you ever get the chance to go, it is so worth it. It taught me so much and I can't wait to go again!"

*Catherine Meehan, High School Senior,
Beginner Novice Rider - **COMPETITOR!***

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

WALT DISNEY

OTHER AREA 1 AEC RIDERS:

Senior Beginner Novice Amateur

- Taylor Phoenix, NH - American Fable

Junior Beginner Novice

- Haley Rosenberg, NY - Sir Teddington - 4th Place
- Anna Duggan, NY - Buster Keaton
- Catherine Meehan, ME - Mustang Molly

Beginner Novice Horse

- Erica Jarrell, MA - SBF Holiday Spirit - 7th Place

Junior Novice

- Cecelia Bette, NY - Jake VI
- Hannah Salmon, NH - Titan

Adult Amateur Training Division

- Sandra Holden - Cano Cristales

A Mother's Tale - 2013 AECs

By SUZANNE ADAMS

Sometimes (and we wish it were more often), the Optimum Minutes receives an idea for an article or an email from a member describing a relevant experience. And sometimes we, the writers, will call or email the sender to get more information (encourage them to write the article themselves) and sometimes, the emailer tells the story in a manner that says it all. The following email came from a mother whose daughter who competed at the American Eventing Championships.

SUBMITTED BY BRENDA HERSCHBACH JARRELL

My daughter, Erica Jarrell, 14, competed two horses at the AECs, both in the Beginner Novice Horse division. Erica had qualified on three horses (the third at Novice), but the third horse was unfortunately lame and unable to join us.

One of the horses that Erica competed was her first pony, Dream Come True ("Snip"). Snip is 18 years old, and Erica had already decided that this would be their last season together. She has free-leased Snip to a wonderful young rider in our barn who sadly lost her father unexpectedly in early September. Erica and Snip finished 10th in the division – a beautiful light blue ribbon to commemorate their last competition together!

Erica's second horse was Area I-bred SBF Holiday Spirit. Erica bought him as a five-year-old, when she was only 11, and has been his only rider ever since. A year ago, Erica and Holiday could not complete a competition. He was stopping at jumps, bucking her off, and generally scaring her half to death. It turned out he had a mild suspensory pull and a total loss of confidence.

Even though she had been planning to move up to Novice and Training with him that summer, she instead stepped back and took him out of competition altogether. She spent most of the year riding him bareback in a halter and leadrope. They focused on relaxation and bonding. As he grew stronger, she brought him back into training slowly, never pushing or rushing. They ended up 7th in the division!

Erica, Snip, and Holiday could never have made the trip to AECs, let alone to win ribbons there, without the incredible support of their trainer, Kathryn Cecere of Harmony Horse Stables in Littleton, MA, and our barn managers, Don Pollard and Kara Comeau, who drove the horses out to Texas, offering them the utmost care the whole way!



**Do you have one of those untold stories?
Let us help you tell it for a future Optimum Minutes.**

