

# NFDA Summer Newsletter

JUNE 2016

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello all! It has been a whirlwind of a year so far! Right now, we are in the middle of our show season. With thanks to our many volunteers, we have had a very successful season thus far. We have finished the first half of our L program and had our recognized shows as well as our freestyle challenge. We are currently working with the facilities that we use for shows to improve some of our issues. We are looking into getting our own sound system in the very near future. We are in discussion with Clay County about their footing as well. We are hoping that we can work together with them to make a great facility even better.

We are having a board meeting June 22 at Mellow Mushroom in Fleming Island. The board is busy planning for several opportunities for members for the summer. Please look to the website for any updates. We have posted pictures on the web- be sure to check them out and send in more! Remember we have a summer series coming so all of you that want to beat the heat can ride in the evenings and hopefully undercover. I hope all of you have a great summer! Please be sure to hug your horses, pets, friends and family! Blessings!

Jill Amburgey





Dear NFDA,

I will never forget your kindness, love and graciousness shown to me on March 26, 2016 at the NFDA Schooling Show. Dusine and I rode down the center line for our final competition completing our Century Ride with many of you, that mean so much to us, watching. What a celebration of "life lived abundantly" this has been to us. Many of you are unaware that Dusine experienced major issues in the months prior to this ride. With much prayer we were able to enter the arena and complete this amazing accomplishment. **We give God the Glory for being able to finish well.** This was our prayer from the beginning and God answered it mightily. Dusine is doing well and very happy these days. We walk and trot around the arena a couple times a week. What an honor we have to ride our faithful horses. They are our loves. Dusine is the most awesome example of finishing well I have ever witnessed. She went into the competition and gave all she had and more. She pulled from deep within herself and was able to do what we did not believe was possible a few days prior. It was an absolutely wonderful day and ride. For just a few moments, I felt like I was riding a horse 10 years younger than she was. She seemed to really enjoy her day!

I will always remember and love each of you for making that day a special time for us...a time of beauty and excitement and great memories for Dennis, Dusine and I. We were NFDA celebrities for a day!

How can I ever begin to thank this club for all it has meant to us. You are to be commended for such wonderful hearts and great spirits.

God bless each of you,  
Dusine and Wanda

# Climbing the Pyramid - Entering the Mid-levels of Dressage Riding: A Journey of Understanding By: Lisa Beardsley



Imagine, for a moment, the opportunity to travel back in time to ask any archeologist that has ventured into the jungles of Mexico or crossed the blazing sands of the Giza plateau to truly explore the pyramids found there, how easy their journey was. Each would most likely answer it was a difficult expedition, was the experience of a lifetime and that they are currently planning their next return. This of course is assumption. The truly concrete thing one would discover about these individuals is that they had dedicated their lives to the study of the Mayan culture or Egyptology. Years were spent learning terminology, studying hieroglyphics and exposing themselves to unfavorable weather and travel conditions during their journeys in their pursuit for knowledge. One would also discover that they all had great and inspiring professors or mentors that were enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge and love for antiquity and adventure!

By briefly reflecting upon the life journey an

archeologist needs to take to discover the secrets of the ancient pyramids, we dressage riders may gain into why the founders of the dressage pyramids may have consciously or subconsciously chosen the pyramid diagram to represent our training scales: It is a never ending lifetime quest to truly become a master possessing the ability to climb to the pyramid zenith or map the passageways within. With dressage mastery, one needs to learn new terminology, learn the hieroglyphics of horse and rider physiology, and have some great professors and mentors willing to share their lifetime accumulation of knowledge.

Recently, I began to stumble up the steep stairs and through the dark passageways of the Dressage Pyramids in search of knowledge and understanding. Having acquired the skills necessary to master the prerequisite lower levels of dressage over the past few years, my quest for understanding the mid-levels of dressage - second through fourth - have begun.

Developed in 1912 from the process manual of the German Calvary for the training of their horses, and not utilized until the 1950s, the Training Scales map out a plan for success in dressage. The main premise being that each lower tier needs to be correctly established before the next tier may be addressed.



**The Dressage Pyramid**

It is also postulated that each lower tier will need to be continuously revisited by both horse and rider to assure true mastery and understanding.

As one enters the mid-levels of dressage it is necessary to have a strong foundation in rider seat and position for the rider along with rhythm, and relaxation for the horse. The training goals of the mid-levels are to establish and gain mastery of contact, impulsion and straightness, reserving collection for the upper levels (PSG, I, and GP)

To gain understanding of these elements one needs to spend some time reading, watching and doing. One needs to master the timing of the aids or cues asking the horse to move in a certain way, as well as the correct placement of the aides. One also needs to have a horse that is physically capable of performing the movements through proper physical conditioning, muscular development and emotional stability. Characteristics that the rider will need to develop as well.

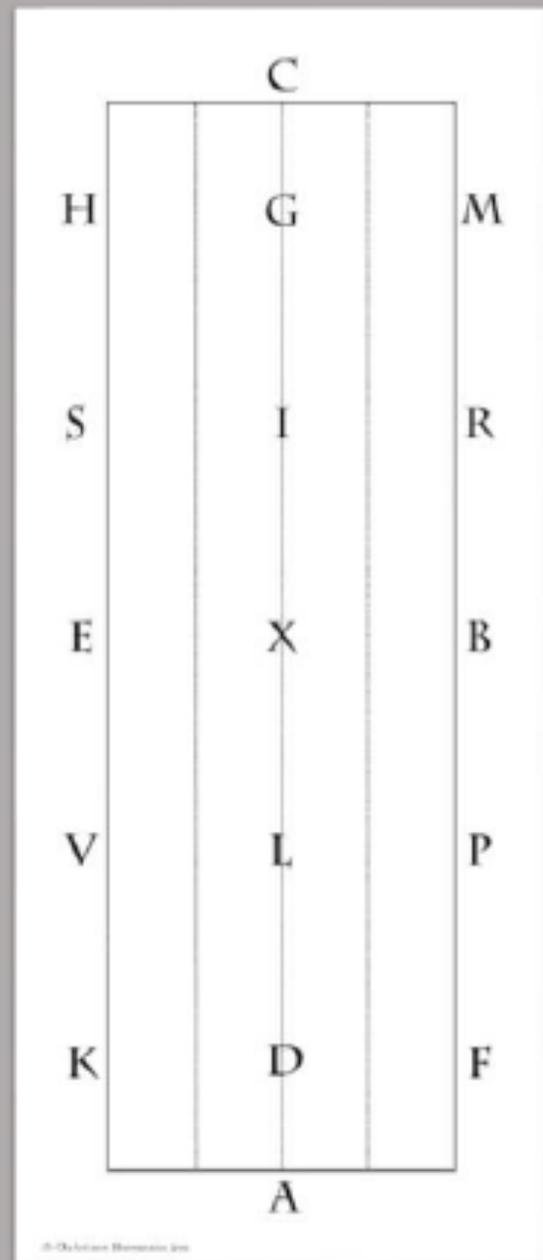


Ascending the stairs of any pyramid is not an easy, quick or simple task. In dressage, it is the dedication of months, and in reality, years of study, physical conditioning and attaining knowledge. That said, time goes by regardless, so we might as well spend it in the pursuit of knowledge in something we enjoy. In dressage, riders may decrease the amount of time they personally spend by finding access to a horse that is already conditioned to suit a level - The Schoolmaster. This horse has been conditioned physically and mentally to perform the movements of a certain level and can now allow a rider to learn the placement and timing of the correct aides in order to obtain a correct result or movement

So we will see how much dedication I am able to put forth.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank the Board Members of NFDA in awarding me an educational scholarship in the amount of \$250 to allow me to receive instruction sessions with Sharon Poulin. I am very grateful. I also encourage each of you, NFDA members, to take advantage of this wonderful program of which information may be found on the website at <http://www.nfiadmessage.org/scholarship-criteria-and-application.html>

Lastly, I offer a quote from an unknown source: "A new rider does not need a \$50,000 horse, but a \$1000 horse with \$49,000 in lessons!"... And as I like to add when I hear this quote recited - "or access to a priceless School Master."





### The Scale of Training

Remember the first time you ever rode a horse? He was an "ol' pro". He was a "been there - done that" horse. He was not a Mustang just run in from the plains and placed in tack. He was your Schoolmaster! Ultimately, the Schoolmaster is the best solution for rider progression. An unskilled individual may have results with an unskilled horse, but the time factor will be greatly increased as both creatures are learning simultaneously. It is a common saying in the classical schools of dressage that "The inexperienced horse needs an experienced rider and the inexperienced rider needs an experienced horse." This is very true.

It was my hope when starting this article to disclose some enlightenment to each of you to speed your progression and mastery. It was my hope to outline the steps you need to take to rapidly see the results you wish for. In reality, what I have discovered thus far has led me to write just the opposite. It will take time to master each level. Time to develop both horse and rider muscles and exercise tolerance. Time to learn correct aide placement and timing. Time to gain understanding into how a horse moves in general and specifically how they respond to correctly applied aides. Time for a horse to learn what he is being asked. Time for the rider to learn how to ask.

That being said, the main necessary element in dressage mastery, with and especially without a Schoolmaster, is to have a mentor that is willing to spend the time to assist with learning the placement and timing of your aides and explain horse physiology. This statement is not exactly what we adult amateurs that own our own lower level horses wish to hear, but a reality none the less. Dressage is not a sport which one may self-teach. It is the result of hundreds of years of knowledge, attained, built upon and passed down. To have a happy well balanced horse that goes around the dressage arena nicely is very possible at the lower levels - intro, training and even first level - to progress beyond, assistance, understanding and knowledge is required.

For myself, I have been lucky enough to find a Schoolmaster - Darkuntahl aka: "The Professor" owned by Lynnette Wadsworth and trained through 4 level movements. He is not a push button horse and will take advantage of my inexperience. He will correctly perform movements when I ask correctly. If I do not, he ignores my requests or does some move he wishes to do. He expects me to be correct. Often, I am not. When I think this horse is incapable of performing a zig zag leg yield down the quarter line, his owner, an AA who currently rides and competes the Grand Prix, gets on and there he goes, ziggling and zagging all over the place. All I can do is let my head hang, give it a shake, remount and give it a few more tries.

I have also been blessed with gaining access to have riding instructions with Sharon Poulin. Together with her assistance, I stumble the stairs and map the dark passageways of the dressage pyramids. Reaching the top is not the goal at this time, but to gain intimate understanding of each tier as we climb, stumbles and all. If all goes as planned, you will see Darkuntahl and I at a show entering 2nd level classes and then third. You will one day see my name published in the USDF X as a bronze metal recipient. But as I said, rider education takes time!



# UF/IFAS EXTENSION ST. JOHNS COUNTY

## SMALL PADDOCK PASTURE MANAGEMENT

**FREE**  
Registration  
Required

**June 23 , 2016**

UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County  
3125 Agricultural Center Dr.  
St. Augustine, FL 32092

### SCHEDULE

- 6:00 p.m.** Registration
- 6:30 p.m.** Meal (Sponsored by the Northeast Florida Dressage Association)
- 7:00 p.m.** Program
- 8:30 p.m.** Question/Answers and Evaluation

Contact UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County  
at 904-209-0430 to register  
before June 21st to reserve your meal.

### TOPICS

<b>Soil Testing Basics</b>	Tim Wilson Production Agriculture Agent UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County
<b>Understanding the Soil Test Report</b>	Dr. Cheryl Mackowiak Extension Specialist Soil Nutrient Management UF/IFAS NFREC - Quincy
<b>How to Establish and/or Manage your Pasture</b>	Dr. Ann Blount Extension Specialist Forage Breeding and Management UF/IFAS NFREC - Marianna