

## USDF FALL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

San Diego, CA  
November 29, 2011

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Attending:	George Williams, President	Beth Jenkins, Vice-President
	Janine Malone, Secretary	Steven Schubert, Treasurer
	Lisa Schmidt, Region 1 Director	Fern Feldman, Region 8 Director
	Ken Levy, Region 2 Director	Bess Reineman, Region 9 Director
	Kimberly Taylor, Region 3 Director	Stephen Hienzsch, Executive Director
	Lloyd Landkamer, Region 4 Director	Cindy Vimont, Staff
	Heather Petersen, Region 5 Director	Connie Huy, Staff
	Donna Longacre, Region 6 Director	Chad Compton, Staff
	Terry Wilson, Region 7 Director	Kathie Robertson, Staff

### **Call to Order and Agenda Review (Additions/Corrections) - George Williams**

George called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. There were no additions to the agenda. **Ken MOVED and Bess SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as amended. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **Approval of EB Minutes – Janine Malone**

Janine reported that all EB meeting minutes have already been approved via email.

### **President's Report – George Williams**

George said that dressage in the US is doing well at the top levels, as the US has produced its strongest Pan Am team ever and there are other programs that are doing well, including the Young Horse and Developing Horse Championships, the Jr/YR National Championships and the NAJYRC. However, the middle and entry levels do not seem to be keeping up and he expressed hope that the work of the Peer to Peer Commission and a national head to head competition can help change that. 2011 had the lowest number of total rides since 2003. Training, First and Second Levels all being ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of the last nine years. PSG was 3<sup>rd</sup>, I-1 was 1<sup>st</sup>, I-2 was 2<sup>nd</sup> and GP was ranked 4<sup>th</sup>. If you compare the number of distinct horses with at least one ride over the last nine years, 2011 ranked 8<sup>th</sup>.

Membership numbers tell a similar story. When you add 5 year and Life memberships to the Participating members, 2011 was still down from 2010 by almost 600 members. Youth memberships continue to drop from a high in 2006. A few GMOs show increases, but they are an exception. Lifetime Horse registrations are down significantly and the number of Participating Members who are not Group Members is at the second highest in seven years and similarly, Participating Members who are Group Members is the lowest in seven years. George expressed the opinion that the poor economy has weeded out the not so serious competitor and serious competitors may feel their local GMO doesn't offer you enough benefits to join. USDF needs a large base from which our shows and sponsors can draw an audience.

George reviewed two important initiatives in his presidency: The Peer to Peer Commission has a goal of making the experience of competing more rewarding for riders by creating a system whereby riders can compete against others of a similar ability and experience. Under the leadership of its chair, Heather Petersen, the commission is working to identify how best to move forward. The second initiative is the Instructor Certification Strategic Planning Group (ICSPG), chaired by Kathy Connelly. The ICSPG is putting forward three main recommendations for the Executive Board consideration: Honorary Instructors, Co-Chairs and a review committee for the materials produced.

Highlights of USDF programs this year include the Farm Vet Adult Clinic Series conducted by Lilo Fore, with clinics being held in Regions 4, 8 and 9 in 2011. Another highlight is the appointment of Jeremy Steinberg, USEF Youth Coach, as a clinician for our Platinum Performance Jr/YR Clinics. These clinics are funded in part by the Dressage Foundation and in the calendar year of 2011, clinics were held in Regions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9. A total of nine 'L' Programs held sessions in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 in 2011. Five of these programs will complete

their final exams in 2011. And the Instructor/Trainer Committee held two USDF Instructor Certification Final Exams in 2011. Another highlight is the upcoming USDF symposium, which will feature all four US dressage coaches.

Several important actions to be taken at this convention include voting for the At Large Directors and voting on the proposal for a National head to head Championships based on a Regional Championship qualifying system. George expressed the opinion that it is time to move forward on a national championship since we now have a good staff and the leadership, volunteer and professional, to make it happen. It is important to note that during the down turn in the economy, the Regional Championships have proven to be rather recession proof. It is a successful program, even though the qualifying process has been more vulnerable to the economy. During the 2010 competition year there were still close to 25,000 qualifying rides throughout the country. Although it may not inspire everyone, a national championship will provide an additional incentive for those USDF Participating Members who are active competitors.

George reminded everyone that USDF should represent all riders, from entry level, to the most elite of the High Performance riders. He considers USDF a grass roots organization only in that everyone has a voice and we strive to listen to all despite their backgrounds. This broad range within our membership means that we have to offer programs that cover the whole spectrum. This includes competition and education programs as well as the proposed national finals which would serve a very active segment of the USDF membership. From the practical side we have to keep in mind that a large number of Participating Members join USDF to compete and for the opportunity to earn year-end awards. They bring in a significant amount of income to USDF through their memberships and purchasing Lifetime Horse Registrations. In fact, competitions, which fall under "promotion and recognition of achievement", bring in a considerable amount of income that enables USDF to do all it does, including in terms of education. If we disenfranchise USEF/USDF competitors, we actually run the risk of reducing income which supports our educational programs. He reiterated that "Education, promotion and recognition of achievement" are the words in our mission statement. George expressed the opinion that, over time, a national dressage championships can develop into a very special event as the NAJYRC has done.

#### **Executive Director's Report – Stephan Hienzsch**

Stephan reported that in 2011, USDF memberships are down approximately 4% from 2010. The numbers are down about equally for PMs and GMs as measured in actual members as well as in memberships. He noted that the financial reports reflect the fiscal year vs. the membership year. Competitions are down about 6% in the number of recorded rides in comparison to the previous year; however, there were the same number of shows in 2010 and 2011. The number of rider awards increased by 7%. The number of riders qualified for regional championships is down but number actually competing in regional championships is about the same. Participation in the USDFBC program is down, as well. The Adult clinics with Lilo Fore have been well received and the changes to the Instructor Trainer program have also been well received. Continuing education programs for judges and "L" grads are not receiving good participation. USDF Jr/YR clinics are doing well regarding attendance, probably due to the elimination of the FEI rider designation, and because of the connection with USEF Youth Coach Jeremy Steinberg. Stephan noted that there is a significant increase in attendance for this year's convention compared to last year. Approximately 500 people are registered to attend the Salute Gala and about 400 are registered in advance to attend the symposium. Convention and Symposium attendance is about 80% above last year's attendance.

Stephan reported that installation of the emergency generator has been delayed since the manufacturing plant was affected by the tsunami in Japan. Installation is expected within the next few weeks. He noted that USDF has cash on hand, from the Capital Campaign, to pay for the cost.

Regarding the status of the Capital Campaign, USDF has "collectable" receivables (i.e., money still due that is expected to be paid), part of which is for the Educational Endowment. Stephan expects a small amount in pledges should be considered "uncollectable" receivables He noted that these figures are reflected in the audit. The total still expected to be paid is in addition to the money already in the Capital Campaign account. USDF must decide soon how to use the Educational Endowment. Stephan explained that we are getting to the point where we need to formalize the entire endowment structure and comply with state regulations related to the solicitation of future funds. This will involve annual expenses for the endowment, and will require USDF to register in all states where USDF does business. Compliance with these regulations will probably require an expense of approximately \$10,000-\$13,000 annually for an outside expert to manage the gift solicitation requirements for USDF.

Regarding financial developments, it was noted that the ability to process credit cards on regional level is a benefit for regions and regional directors. Stephan next drew attention to a page in the EB notebooks showing a historical analysis of the budget. There is a reduction of approximately \$1,000,000 from the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget to the 2012-2013 fiscal year budget. Expenses have been reduced to 2004 levels and salaries and benefits are comparable to the 2007-2008 budget, when USDF had 42 on staff, including full time contractors. Currently, USDF employs 32 in house staff and two contractors, and is providing more services with a much smaller staff. Stephan drew additional comparisons, noting that USDF is doing more with less. He thinks USDF has reached its limit on work that can be extended with current staffing.

Stephan next reviewed marketing initiatives. The 2012 Competition and Member Guide is now renamed the "Member Guide" and has been redesigned to appeal to more people. USDF plans to distribute about 35,000 copies. For the first time, the publication will be sent to GMs as well as PMs. It was distributed to members with the November USDF Connection. He noted that USDF expects to get more ad revenue to pay for the increased distribution. Members of the EB suggested that the list of EB members be included in future years. New dressage tests are missing, including the new Olympic Games GP Special. Several people recommended that GMO membership should be mentioned on the USDF website and on the USDF membership form. USDF has sent out a lot of marketing material in the last year for GMOs to use to promote or enhance their membership programs. Stephan believes that several GMOs have utilized the materials and emphasized that USDF can best utilize its resources by creating resources that GMOs can use for free. USDF has promoted a free three-month Education Membership to promote its benefits. Stephan said that the free promotion has attracted several hundred members so far. USDF has also created a promotional booth around e-TRAK and has a promotional drawing with SmartPak. So far, the new promotional booth has been set up at the USPC Festival, AQHA World show, Dressage at Devon, Arabian Sport Horse Nationals and some other events. He noted that the lowest response to the USDF booth was at the AQHA World show, where USDF had two staff people in attendance for the entire eight day amateur part of the event. He concluded his report by adding that USDF is targeting the Western Dressage Association, Morgan Horse Association, Intercollegiate Dressage Association and some others for e-TRAK and Education Membership promotion.

#### **Treasurer's and Financial Reports – Steven Schubert**

Steve reported that for the 2010-2011 fiscal year that ended on March 31, 2011, the audited financials have been published and that actual revenues and expenses were under budget. The budgeted revenue was \$3,788,046 and the actual revenue was \$3,798,716 for a positive variance of \$10,692. The budgeted expenses were \$3,950,046 with actual expenses of \$3,531,727, which was \$418,319 under budget. The actual operating income was \$266,991, which is the profit before depreciation. The total net income for the fiscal year, with depreciation added back in, was \$425,504.

#### **Financials**

The statement of activities through October 31, 2011 shows an actual operating loss of \$140,508 vs. a budgeted operating loss of \$214,337 projected for the end of October. Revenues are under budget and expenses are also under budget. It was noted that the actual expense related to publications is lower than budgeted at this point in the fiscal year. Steve said that USDF operations are about \$73,000 ahead of plan now according to the most current financial report.

#### **Investments**

The USDF portfolio has regained about \$1 million, net of depreciation, from its value in 2007. It was reported that the Investment Committee met recently and decided to maintain its current conservative strategy and to keep the same concentration in bond funds and to avoid investing more in equities for the next six months in order to avoid large fluctuations in the value of USDF's investments.

#### **Budget**

Steve reported that no changes have been made to the proposed 2012-2013 fiscal year budget from the version that was reviewed in the EB meeting where the draft budget was presented.

### **EB Reimbursement Policy**

Kimmie questioned the annual convention reimbursement policy for regional directors. The current policy was reviewed and it was explained that regional directors are currently entitled to receive up to \$750 reimbursement upon submission of receipts. All EB members receive complimentary convention and symposium registration, as well as invitations to the Salute Gala. Steven gave the opinion that RDs should be reimbursed for the days they are required to be present. There are no regional funds anymore to help subsidize regional directors as some regions had in the past. Most regional directors felt they should have expenses fully covered by USDF for the convention. **Donna MOVED and Kimmie SECONDED a motion that the EB support, in principle, the concept of equitable expense reimbursement for regional directors to attend the annual convention. MOTION CARRIED.** Steven was requested to research the approximate impact on the budget and report back to the EB at its meeting on Friday.

### **National Championship Funds**

Steve reported that current value of the USDF National Championship Fund is approximately \$620,000 and that the fund is designated as start-up money for a national championships.

### **USEF Activities Report – Janine Malone and George Williams**

George and Janine reviewed recent activities in USEF and a few proposed rule changes that will be voted during the USEF convention in January. Several USDF GMO members have objected to two proposed USEF rule changes that would prohibit USDF affiliates from collecting non-USEF fees. Janine was appointed by USEF to a task force to consider possible variations of the proposed rule changes. She explained that five USDF GMOs currently charge non-USEF fees and she has set up a meeting with those GMO leaders and their regional directors in order to explain the changes and possible alternatives for Dressage. Terry Wilson noted that a group from California has written a letter opposing the national championship proposal that will be considered by the BOG.

### **Management Committee Report – (closed session)**

George reviewed confidential items discussed by the Management Committee meeting. Bess and Ken brought up concerns from the Regional Director meeting held on Monday evening prior to this meeting.

### **Follow UP 2012 Committee Chair Appointments**

George updated the EB on the status of committee chair appointments.

### **Policies and Procedures Proposed Edits – Janine Malone**

**Bess MOVED and Kimmie SECONDED a motion to approve proposed changes and additions to the following USDF Policies and Procedures under Chapter IV. Membership: A.11, B.10, D.3 and F. 5. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

### **Instructor Certification – Kathy Connelly and Kathie Robertson**

Kathy Connelly reviewed the mission and goals for the ICSPG which is to study the current USDF Instructor/Trainer Certification Program, with the goal of proposing improvements to make it more relevant and to ensure its success in the future. The ICSPG recognizes that US Dressage is now a global entity and the Instructor/Trainer Program and Committee needs to reflect this and stay current. Kathy noted that during the current year, the ICSPG reviewed, approved and recommended the Introductory Faculty proposal to the Executive Board, and is pleased that it was approved.

Kathy reviewed the recommendation for an Honorary Instructor category including the suggested criteria. The ICSPG recommends a committee be designated by the USDF President to review candidates for the Honorary Instructor category. A pyramid was developed to demonstrate the level within the Instructor Trainer program and was included in the ICSPG report in the EB notebook.

The ICSPG recommends that all candidates for Honorary Instructor must be ambassadors for the sport and must uphold horse welfare, and characterize the high standards of USDF. This level of recognition has been discussed many times over the past several years. Many well respected Trainer/Instructors have expressed interest in becoming involved in the program at this level if invited. USDF needs to identify, invite and recognize candidates who will act as ambassadors and strengthen the credibility of the program both nationally and internationally.

Because the Instructor/Trainer Committee is so vast in its education and responsibilities, the ICSPG recommends that this Committee should have a chair and a co-chair; one who is already on the Committee and one other who is a highly respected member of the dressage community. The co-chairs should be people who have credibility and can gain the respect nationally and internationally to carry this program forward.

Another recommendation of the ICSPG is for USDF to explore the Kentucky Horse Park as a future site to host further USDF Training Programs. With stabling already in place, it was suggested that having the buildings to billet riders, grooms, etc. during programs would be a huge plus for every discipline within the park and also USDF.

The ICSPG feels strongly there should be a review committee for all educational materials whether audio, printed or other formats, in other words, all media. George expressed the opinion this is a concept that should be incorporated for “L” faculty materials, as well. This review group should include a member of the Instructor Trainer Committee, someone who is knowledgeable in dressage and also strong editorial skills and background, and four other members designated by the President who are very knowledgeable in dressage. It was agreed that this change should be put in place as soon as possible. This concept is being brought forward to the EB to ensure the strengthening of this program.

The EB expressed appreciation for the work of the ICSPG. It was noted that the EB previously approved the ICSPG recommendation to rename Instructor Certification levels. The EB also approved the recommendations to allow current Recognized Teachers at Training through Second Level to remain as part of the Instructor Trainer program but not accept further applications for certification at that level and to discontinue Recognized Teacher certification at all other levels.

Kathy reviewed the method of selection for Honorary Instructors that is recommended by the ICSPG. The following individuals would serve on a selection committee: the USDF President, the chair(s) of the Instructor/Trainer Committee, and three others designated by the USDF President with approval of the EB. The EB suggested that the selection committee term be for three years and that it should start in January 2012. **Janine MOVED and Heather SECONDED a motion to approve an Honorary Instructor selection committee to consist of the USDF President, the Chair of the Instructor/Trainer Committee (or a designated member of the committee), and three additional people who are respected members of the Dressage community and designated by the USDF President, with approval of the EB. Recommendations will be made to the USDF Executive Board who will approve Honorary Instructors and after approval invite Honorary Instructors to join the program. The term of the Honorary Instructor Selection Committee will be three years and will start in January 2012. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.** It was suggested that Honorary Members could join USDF at any level of membership. **Heather MOVED and Donna SECONDED a motion that to maintain current status as a USDF Honorary Instructor/Trainer, an individual must remain current at any level of USDF membership. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Fern MOVED and Terry SECONDED a motion to establish a review committee for all educational materials. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

Other items of interest were reviewed as related to the Instructor Trainer program. A draft pyramid showing the relationship of the different Instructor/Trainer categories was developed by the ICSPG and is under discussion between the ICSPG and the IT Committee. Kathie Robertson suggested waiting until the spring 2012 EB meeting for further discussion on the FEI Level Workshop and Certification criteria. The ICSPG agreed with the Instructor/Trainer Committee recommendation that examiners for this level should be chosen from the pool of American talent.

The EB reviewed other items in the report including the phasing out of the Associate Instructor level of recognition, and giving options for them to proceed within the system. It was agreed not to dissolve this level of recognition in order to be fair to those who have achieved it.

#### **Peer to Peer Commission – Donna Rocchetti**

The mission of the commission is to make riding in dressage competitions more attractive and rewarding for riders by creating ways or a system whereby riders can compete against others of a similar ability and experience. The

commission was reactivated in August of this year with Heather Petersen as chair. Donna and Heather reported that the group is considering new divisions that could be added to dressage competitions that would better appeal to subgroups of the USDF membership, and how USDF awards might support such changes. Feedback and ideas have been requested of members through regional e-newsletters and will also be gathered during a meeting at this convention. It was noted that judges are not supportive of a designation for AA-friendly judges. Lois Yukins is aware of the concerns that some people want a list of amateur-friendly judges and will discuss this during one of the Judges Committee meetings at this convention. Terry noted that California has a series of shows for amateur riders that is very successful. The Peer to Peer Commission has received a good response so far to its email query and is beginning to reach out to other breeds and organizations such as USEA, Pony Club and 4-H in an effort to increase support for dressage.

#### **Policies and Procedures Proposed Edits (continued) – Janine Malone**

The EB initially approved amended changes to proposals for Chapter VI. policies B.4 and H.10 a. After further discussion, it was determined that the policy proposal was to provide for implementation of motions approved at the 2010 BOG meeting. The EB discussed that the following motion approved by the 2010 BOG should be reconsidered by its proponent, the Regional Championships Committee, since it could not be implemented as written:

Require competitions occurring between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Monday (or the weekend just prior to the closing date) to submit their results which must be received in the USDF Office within 3 days of the competition, effective for the 2012 Championships.

**Heather MOVED and Bess SECONDED a motion to rescind approval of amended policies to Competitions B4 and H10. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Janine MOVED and Fern SECONDED a motion to send the following motion back to the Regional Championship Committee that was approved by the 2010 BOG since staff and EB feel it cannot be implemented as stated in the motion: Require competitions occurring between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Monday (or the weekend just prior to the closing date) to submit their results which must be received in the USDF Office within 3 days of the competition, effective for the 2012 Championships. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

#### **2014 Convention Site Visit Report - Cindy Vimont**

Cindy stated that based on an EB decision to hold the 2014 convention at one of several hotels in Region 8 that submitted bids, she visited three hotels: the Hyatt Regency Cambridge in Cambridge, MA; the Boston Park Plaza in Boston; and Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel and Spa in Newport, RI. She reviewed the amenities of each, including the sleeping room costs. The EB originally chose the Boston Park Plaza as its first choice, and wasn't very supportive of the Newport hotel. Cindy was very impressed with the Newport option. Steven said that in case of bad weather in the winter, the bridges to Newport could be impassable. He recommended Boston over Newport. Fern felt that downtown Boston and Newport both give a good New England experience. Cindy noted that the Boston Park Plaza was less accommodating regarding flexibility and the needs of USDF for the convention. Beth felt that NEDA would choose the Newport location because of the affordability and she said that NEDA has discussed holding a symposium in conjunction with the meeting. It is noted that the Newport hotel is on Goat Island and that there are other hotels on the mainland side of the causeway. Steve will visit the Newport site in the next two weeks and will report back to USDF.

#### **Meet With Council Chairs**

Veronica Holt, Activities Council chair and Anne Sushko, Administrative Council chair, joined the meeting and all on the EB introduced themselves. George asked for their recommendations as to what could be done, based on their first year as Council chairs, to improve the process. Veronica and Anne agreed that Stephan has kept them well informed but that there was otherwise a lack of communication that should be addressed starting in the new year. The Administrative Council had two calls during the year, and the Activities Council had about the same. They didn't participate in any committee meetings of committees on which they were not a member.

**Donna MOVED and Heather SECONDED a motion to require that the Committee chairs review their committee members each year, report to their council chair and that the council chair must submit a report to the Executive Board by October 15. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

Janine expressed concern that many committee reports have very little information and give the impression that not much work is being done. There was general discussion about how to get more information from the committees. Cindy noted that a main purpose of the addition of ALDs to the EB was better communication back and forth between the EB and committees.

Donna said that a lot of GMOs in her region feel that they are being bypassed by USDF. Anne said that there is discussion in the Membership and GMO Committees about this concern, and she noted that a lot of GMO members don't know they are USDF members. Stephan said that he believes there are many misconceptions about membership and there should not be resistance by GMOs for GM members to become PMs, especially since the statistics show that GMs don't drop their GMO membership when they become PMs. There was extensive further discussion of how USDF should best support its members. Also discussed was how to better promote opportunity classes at USEF competitions, which could appeal to new GMO member competitors. Various ideas were presented as to how educational funds can be granted to GMOs in some regions and other ways to help support GMO educational initiatives.

**Steven MOVED and Fern SECONDED a motion to adjourn the EB meeting at 5:30 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janine W. Malone  
USDF Secretary