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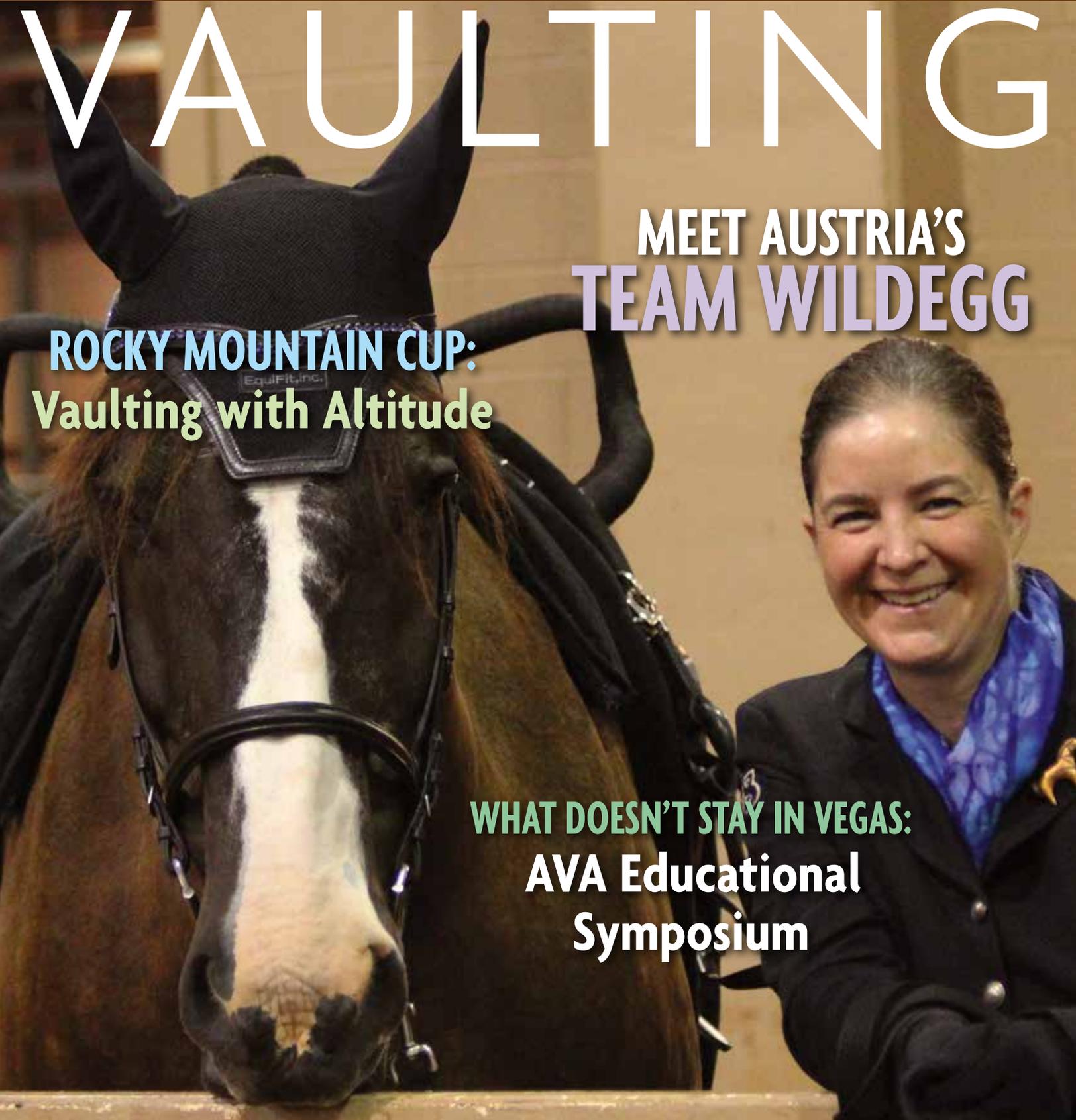
The Official Publication of the American Vaulting Association

VAULTING

**MEET AUSTRIA'S
TEAM WILDEGG**

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN CUP:
Vaulting with Altitude**

**WHAT DOESN'T STAY IN VEGAS:
AVA Educational
Symposium**



EQUESTRIAN VAULTING

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EQUESTRIAN VAULTING



On the cover



On the Cover: Pete and longeur Jenn Williams take a break during the 2016 National Championships in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Photo: Roy Friesen.

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A letter from . . . *Kathy*

As both the President and VP of Competitions of the American Vaulting Association, I write to express my gratitude for the volunteers and sponsors who support our volunteer-run organization. It's a great honor to know so many selfless people who work so hard for the greater good of vaulting in this country.

I would also like to give a huge shout-out to our 2016 Nationals' sponsors. Their support and continued investment in our wonderful sport made the 2016 USEF/AVA National Championships a huge success:

AVA Circle of Friends, the Benjamin and Guimarin families, Carol Beutler, Carolyn Bland, Craig Coburn, Joy Coburn, Julia Cox, Sue Detol, the Divita family, Jane Egger and Cedar Lodge Vaulters, EVX, Falconwood Vaulters, Garrod Farms, Connie Geisler, Kelley Holly and Tambourine Vaulters, the Kiernan family, John and Dena Madden, Amy McCune, Sara Nicholson, Katherine Rynning, the Salisbury family, William Simonds, Shari Smith-Mead, Alyssa and Katharina Woodman, Region II, Region III, Region V, Region IX and Region X.

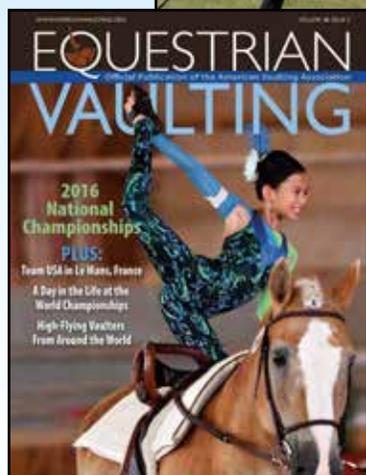
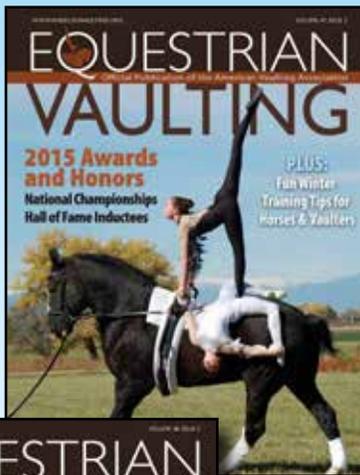
Nationals 2016 was a tribute to vaulting's "spirit of giving," as Jodi Rinard from Mile High Vaulters ended up carrying 37 vaulters from 14 different clubs (as well as her own). Thank you Mile High Vaulters!

And, finally, a special thank you to Craig Coburn for his tremendous help in soliciting sponsors for the 2016 Nationals, and for all that he does. Craig sustains the sport of vaulting through leading by example and encouraging people to get involved. His passion and dedication is remarkable and we all appreciate his unwavering support and expertise.

Volunteers, I want all of you to know how appreciated you are. Let's continue to work together to make wonderful vaulting experiences for everyone. Thank you all for seeing the potential and passion that we all—coaches, longeurs, judges, vaulters, friends and family—have for equestrian vaulting. Thank you for lending a helping hand and, looking ahead to Nationals 2017, let's carry this great momentum forward!

It's a pleasure to serve,

Katherine Rynning



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The WORLD in a WEEKEND

Photo by Sara Nicholson

by **Tessa Divita**

“ Throughout the event, whenever a session ended, the clinicians were swamped with fans of all ages and vaulting levels wanting to share how inspired they were by their new coaches and friends. ”

When I first walked into the barrel arena on Friday afternoon of the AVA Education Symposium, I was greeted by a plethora of foreign accents bouncing off of the walls.

My ears perked up in excitement upon hearing phrases like “new technique I just discovered” and “this is how my team trains this technique” coming from the mouths of my vaulting heroes. In the span of one Friday afternoon, I was able to work with Kristina Boe, Jacques Ferrari and Stefan Csandl, all victims of my obsessive internet stalking on account of their multiple FEI medals, championship titles and statuses as the best vaulters in the world.

To put that in perspective, if I were to try and recreate that experience without the symposium, I would have had to fly myself, my coach/lunger/mom and my horse from the US to first Germany, then France, then Austria,

and back again. That would have taken months of planning, at least a week to actually do, and thousands of dollars. Instead, it took a few clicks on my computer to plan, a couple of hours of travel and three hours of amazing insight from the people with whom I normally only interact when I see them on my screensaver.

The Atlantic Ocean was no longer an obstacle holding me back. And that was just one of the three days of the Symposium!

As the weekend progressed, I was able to work with even more amazing clinicians as my group of vaulters traveled to different stations and learned new drills, techniques for injury prevention, strategies for maximizing our scores, and much more.

What made the symposium so great was not simply

...continued on 6

the educational opportunities it provided, but also how much fun it was! There were many opportunities for networking that allowed vaulters to bond over their shared passions through exciting zumba lessons, stimulating conversations about the future of vaulting at the youth roundtable, and celebrations of our nation's success in vaulting. I was fortunate enough to be one of the hosts of the awards banquet that was held on Saturday night, and being able to see the looks of pride and joy on the faces of the awards winners is one of my favorite memories of the symposium. There is nothing

more inspiring and motivating than being acknowledged for one's hard work.

I was not the only one who was changed by this amazing symposium. Throughout the event, whenever a session ended, the clinicians were swamped with fans of all ages and vaulting levels wanting to share how inspired they were by their new coaches and friends. One of my favorite moments was watching clinician Kristian Roberts teach a duo of tiny tots and their coach how to begin the process of learning a proper handstand. Whether it was in learning a nuanced technique, fine-tuning a routine, or establishing a foundation to grow on, everyone who attended the symposium left it greatly improved.



Tessa Divita has won several USEF/AVA National Championships and was a member of Team USA at the 2012 World Championships, the 2014 World Equestrian Games, and 2015 Junior World Championships where she was a member of the bronze-medal-winning squad. She is currently studying Molecular Biology at UC Berkeley and trying to fit as much vaulting into her life as possible between lectures and study sessions.

The Judge's Corner

By **Kendel Edmunds**, AVA R Judge

Welcome to the Judge's Corner! This will be an ongoing column in the Equestrian Vaulting publication and the AVA Blast. The intent is to provide relative information from the judge's perspective and offer a Q & A format for coaches, competitors, lungers, and parents. The following email has been set up to receive questions: thejudgescorner@gmail.com.

This year the Junior World Championships will be held in Ebreichsdorf, Austria August 2nd – 6th. If you are or have a competitor who is interested in trying out, make sure to be current on all the selection criteria and rules for USEF vaulting competitions.

One major difference between national events and international events is that you may not switch horses or lungers, meaning compulsories and freestyle must be performed on the same horse lunged by the same person (Article 108.6 b). See the AVA Rules for Vaulting, Chapter III, Rules for International Events, for a complete listing of rules and regulations. For Junior Pas De Deux, the age restrictions are the same as Individuals and each vaulter must be between the ages of 14 – 18; this is not listed in the AVA Rule book, but we follow the FEI Rules.

If you still have questions, I would suggest contacting the competition management at the selection trial you are planning on attending.

JULY 20-23, 2017



Rocky Mountain CVI

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At the Ranch:
Loveland, Colorado

2017 AVA Educational Symposium

From the world-class caliber clinicians to the extensive educational content to the delicious gourmet chocolate bars in the souvenir bags, the 2017 AVA Educational Symposium in Las Vegas delivered an amazing educational experience. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Carolyn Bland and countless others on the organizing committee, the coaches and lungers, vaulters, parents and auditors who attended the symposium were able to benefit from the best of the best.

The Symposium presented training of the highest quality, taught by world renowned experts in the vaulting world including Kristina Boe, Jacques Ferarri, Stefan Csandl, John Eccles, Carolyn Bland, Kristian Roberts, and Rob de Bruin as well as by dressage expert Sarah Martin. From a coach's perspective, one of the most important and informative sessions was Stefan Csandl's presentation on vaulting injuries and how to prevent them.

A physical therapist as well as a vaulter, coach and clinician, Csandl brought his considerable expertise to the subject. Among other things, he stressed the need to practice jumping and rebounding at the beginning of every practice to build muscle memory of proper landing and rebound form. He also stressed that coaches should not hesitate to send a vaulter to consult with a physical therapist if they consistently land jumps incorrectly, particularly if they are landing either knock-kneed or bowlegged. Csandl also offered a class on proper stretching technique and instruction and shared a series of mobilization drills that he developed to prepare himself for vaulting.

A key theme communicated by several of the clinicians was the idea of breaking goals down into the small incremental steps necessary for success. Kristian Roberts' session on the handstand identified a progressive series of drills to develop the strength, balance and technique necessary to perform a successful handstand. Similarly, Stefan Csandl outlined a series of drills designed to provide the technique and strength necessary to perform certain compulsories.



Tamara Desai

Coach's Perspective

In his Effective Coaching lecture, John Eccles also stressed the need to identify a goal, then break that goal down into the small steps necessary to accomplish it. Even the horse-oriented offerings stressed this 'small steps' approach. Dressage expert Sarah Marshall outlined a step-by-step training scale that provides the balance, suppleness and other qualities necessary for successful self-carriage in vaulting horses.

Another important concept underlying the symposium was the idea that people learn better by doing than they do by just hearing. Coaches did more than simply listen to clinicians describe proper coaching techniques.

For example, in John Eccles' session on coaching, participating coaches were asked to actually coach vaulters and afterwards they received expert input on their coaching technique and what would

improve it.

Other valuable track sessions for coaches included a session by Carolyn Bland on appropriate use of social media. Bland recommended that a coach review and approve any vaulting photos a team member wants to post, particularly to make sure horses are depicted in a proper light and safety requirements are met. Coaches also discussed the need for an adult team member to monitor vaulter social media chat groups to ensure appropriate content and relationships among team members. Carolyn Bland also taught a helpful session entitled Planning and Participating in International Competition, and FEI4* Judge Rob de Bruin taught a class that outlined how the artistic score is calculated by judges.

Just as important as the planned sessions, however, were the opportunities for coaches to network among themselves, sharing insights and ideas and just enjoying being together and celebrating their shared love of this sport. The Awards Banquet was an opportunity for our community to honor and congratulate those who shone particularly brightly in 2016, but throughout the symposium AVA members from Maine to California joined together to enjoy the mutual support and camaraderie that is so much a part of equestrian vaulting.

Tamara Desai is the coach of Vaulting Visions in Swedesboro, NJ. She has been a member of the AVA since her daughter Kiara began vaulting approximately five years ago. In Tamara's pre-vaulting life, she was an attorney and an officer in the United States Army.



Photo by Andrea Fuchhumer

Q *with* TEAM WILDEGG

& A Interview and Translation by **NATALIE DEFEE MENDIK**

At the 2016 FEI World Championships in Le Mans, France, the vaulting world had the opportunity to see a new move played out on the world stage: Austria's Senior Team Wildegg's hand-to-hand handstand. *Equestrian Vaulting* had the chance to chat with them about this and much more.

Equestrian Vaulting: *Every vaulter dreams of creating a new, signature move. Tell me about the making of Team Wildegg's iconic hand-to-hand handstand.*

Team Wildegg: The handstand started out more or less for fun. Nikolaus und Anna began practicing it on the ground, more as a personal challenge than thinking of actually adding it to the team freestyle. The move then became secure on the ground, the barrel, and the moving barrel. We had always wanted to show an extraordinary move, that no one had ever done, so we stepped up our hand-to-hand handstand training. In preparation for the World Championships, we intensively trained this move, and it became better- and most importantly, more secure. In the end, we decided to incorporate it into our team freestyle.

Equestrian Vaulting: *What does being a part of a team mean to you?*

Team Wildegg: It means bringing together many different personalities, which isn't always easy- but this is also part of our team's true strength. The nice thing about being part of a team is that you support and motivate each other, and you can count on your teammates 100%. Teammates are there for one another and help each other, both during and outside of training. We know each other in virtually every aspect of our lives. In a team, the performance of the vaulters, trainers, and naturally the horse counts; a team is only as strong as its weakest member.

Equestrian Vaulting: *What is the secret behind Team Wildegg's success?*

Team Wildegg: On the one hand, hard and exact training with the motto "No pain, no gain!" and on the other hand, having fun together and good team spirit. Our team is like a second family to us, in which everyone looks out for and supports each other. Critical to our success is the support and hard work of our motivated coach and horse trainer put in; they care for the horse, create our training plan, and so much more.

Equestrian Vaulting: *What advice would you give young vaulters?*

Team Wildegg: It's important that you enjoy the sport, don't get knocked down by small set-backs, and always keep your eye on your goals.

Equestrian Vaulting: *What do you see in the future for our sport?*

Team Wildegg: How vaulting will develop in the future is hard to say. The sport is already at a very high level of difficulty, both in individual and in squad. But you never know- everyone is excited to see how our sport will continue to develop!

Natalie DeFee Mendik is a seven-time American Horse Publications Equine Media Awards winner, FEI-level dressage rider, and longeur for Velocity Vaulters.



The Rocky Mountain Vaulting

By **Robin Bowman**, President, RMC

The Rocky Mountain Cup CVI 1*, 2* and 3*, will be held July 20-23 in Loveland, Colorado. This will be the first time a CVI is held in the Rocky Mountain Region. The competition will be held at The Ranch (site of the 2015 AVA Nationals) and participants are invited to stay at the adjacent Embassy Suites. This competition will be suitable for many different types of vaulters.

We invite you to consider attending the Rocky Mountain Cup 1) If you are wanting to compete in your first ever CVI. 2) If you are an experienced international competitor looking for a less-expensive competition. 3) If you are hoping to rapidly advance in your CVI levels. 4) And if you want to combine a vaulting competition with an awesome vacation.

Even if you're not sure you are ready to compete at an international competition, the Rocky Mountain Cup is an affordable way to try it. All CVI 1*, 2* and 3* divisions will be offered: Children, Juniors, Seniors, Pas de Deux and Squad. That means that if you are at least 12 years old and competing at canter, there is a division for you.

If you are an experienced international competitor, the Rocky Mountain Cup is a less-expensive alternative to competing abroad. This competition, governed by FEI rules, will maintain the highest standards. This year's judges are all FEI 4* level judges: Craig Coburn, (USA), Suzanne Detol, (USA), Frank Spadinger (Austria), and Karolina "Mimmi" Wickholm (Finland). [Craig Coburn and Frank Spadinger will be heading to Austria after the Rocky Mountain Cup to judge the 2017 Junior World Championships and Senior European Championships.]

If you are looking to advance in the CVI levels, the Rocky Mountain Cup offers you the chance to register for two levels concurrently. In the event that you achieve a first-round score that qualifies you for the next level, you may be able to compete at the higher level, if you registered for both and the schedule permits. This is a great way to advance in your CVI levels without breaking the bank.

And if you are still not sure you will be up for a CVI level competition, a regular vaulting competition will follow the CVI at the same venue. This USEF/AVA competition

will have classes for all levels that will count towards high point and rankings.

Finally, of course, it's Colorado! For many of us, vaulting competitions are our vacations. Come vault and take a vacation. Loveland, Colorado is also known as The Gateway to the Rockies. The venue is less than hour from the mountains and a wealth of summer fun awaits.



Photo by Jerry Yang

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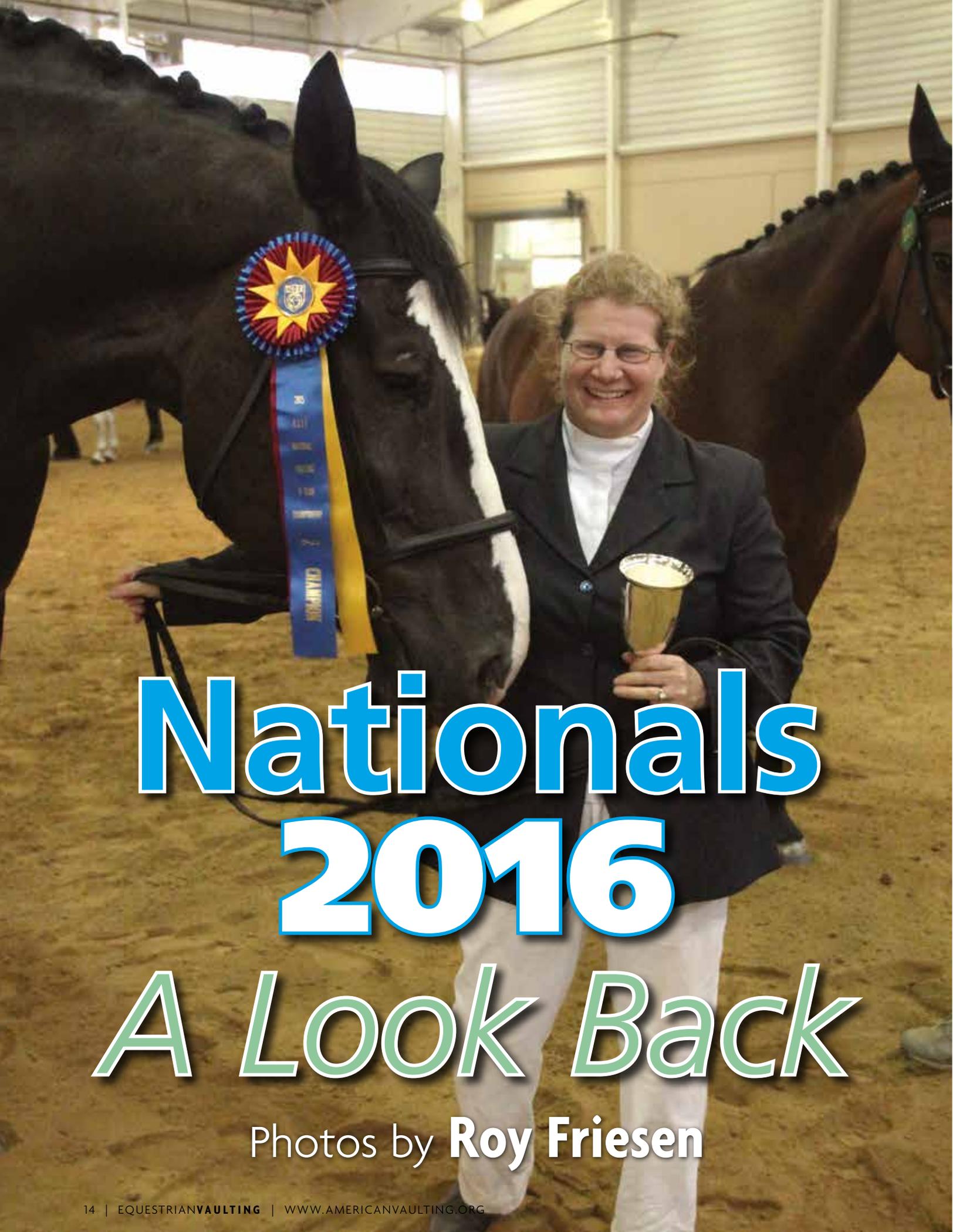
Check out our webpage at: <http://rockymtncup.org>

Join our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/CVIRockyMountain>

Or contact me directly at: thebowmans4@msn.com

As a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit; the RMC's stated goal is to organize international events, that will aid in furthering the sport of vaulting. You can help by either making a single tax deductible donation or by joining the "Catch the Vision Club". This club takes small donations from lots of people to add up to make a big impact. However, you can make a difference by coming to this event. We really want to see you in Loveland this summer as we provide an event that meets your needs!



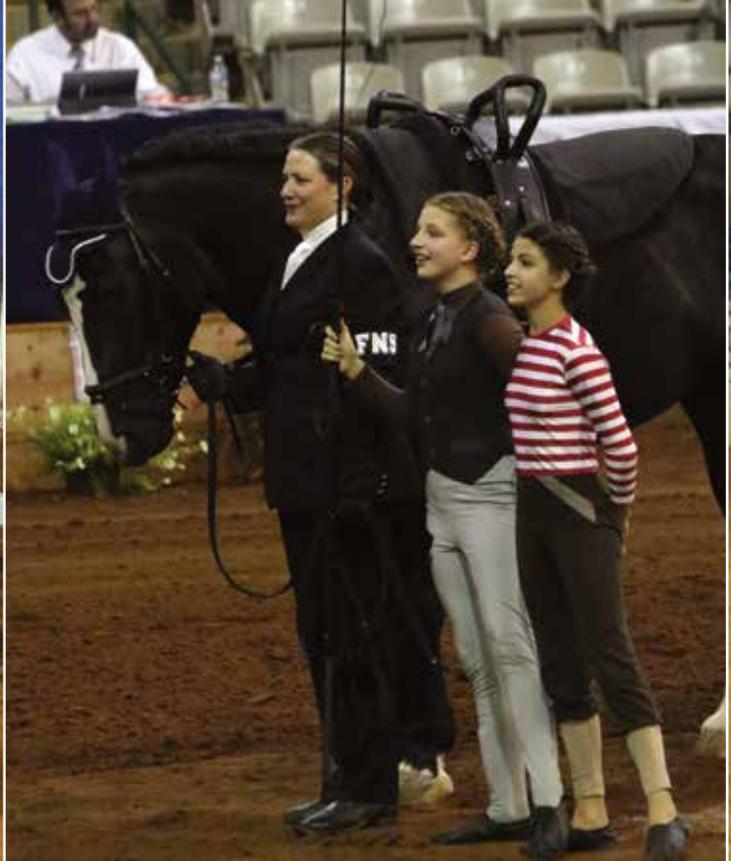


Nationals 2016

A Look Back

Photos by **Roy Friesen**







United States Pony Club and A

A Nature

By **Beth Whillock**

Vaulting currently fills the role of ‘associated discipline’ within the United States Pony Club (USPC), meaning USPC members may participate in vaulting at their mounted and unmounted meetings, and the activity is covered under USPC insurance. It is also considered an area of educational interest for the USPC’s membership. However, it is not classified as a competitive discipline within the USPC, so its membership cannot attain USPC ratings in vaulting or compete in vaulting within the organization.

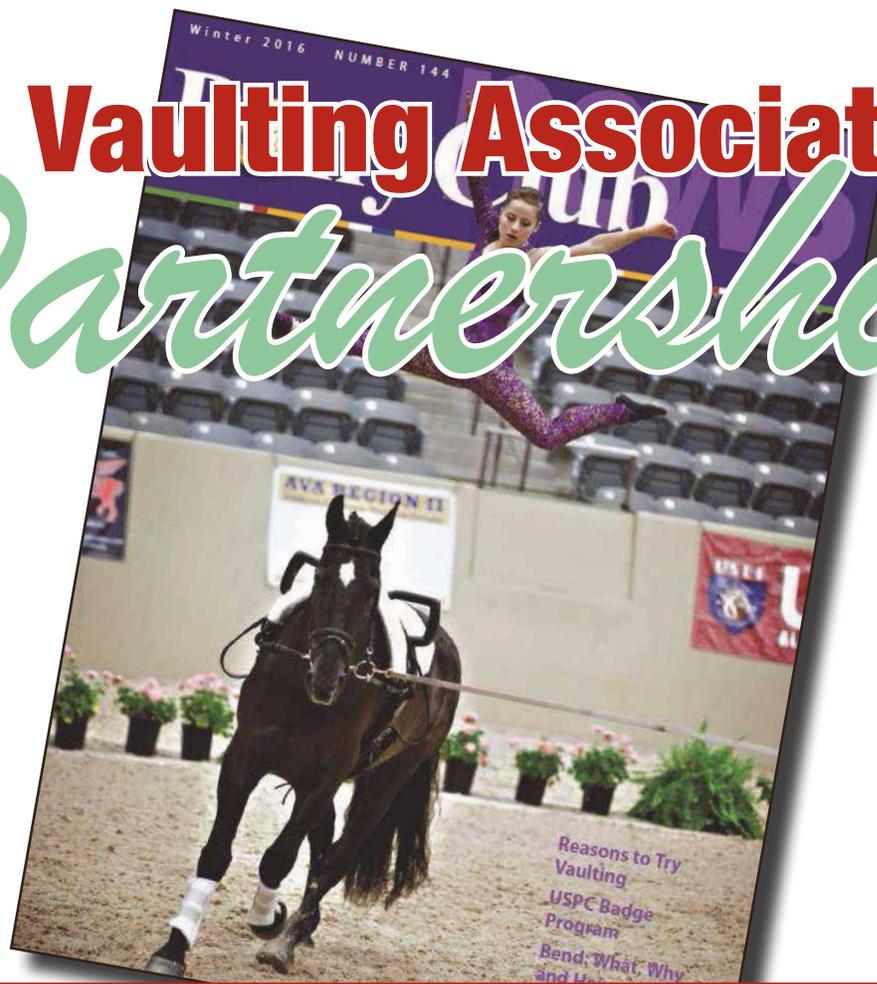
- Historically, vaulting enjoyed a role within the USPC, which had lapsed over time. Three years ago, the AVA approached USPC with the goal of reinstating vaulting as an approved activity, which successfully went into effect in 2014. In recent years, we have made strides forward, some highlights include:
- Revised and republished the USPC Vaulting Rulebook (completed in 2013). This is now updated annually.
- Established a team made up of AVA & USPC members to advise both organizations on vaulting (active since 2015).
- Identified a national resource the USPC could count on for information (currently Beth Whillock).
- Developed training materials that the USPC could use to educate its membership on vaulting (we currently have 2 items identified, and need more).
- Have a presence at the USPC annual conference – the AVA had a booth in 2016, taught a workshop & had a booth in 2017, and had official representation at the USPC board meeting in 2017.
- Offer articles on vaulting for Pony Club News, the official publication of USPC, as well as in USPC’s blog- in 2016, vaulting was even on the cover of the USPC national magazine.

Now it is time to consider the next step: becoming an approved discipline within the USPC. Why would we do that? Here are the reasons that the AVA would benefit from a closer relationship with the USPC:

- The USPC has a large pool of young equestrians that might be interested in getting involved in vaulting if opportunities were available. The USPC is considered the premier group in the US to introduce young people to the world of equestrian sport; as one of the original FEI disciplines, vaulting should be on the list. USPC vaulting participants have a strong possibility of feeding into AVA membership.
- If we have a close relationship between the groups, it would encourage our membership to take advantage of the USPC’s incredible horse management and education system, and possibly feeding into USPC membership.
- The possibility of joint competitions would be much higher, which would greatly help smaller regions that have trouble funding fests on their own. USPC has already expressed interest in large joint competitions with the AVA, such as the USPC Festival or National Championships. This could help the AVA secure large competition sites.
- As a recognized USPC discipline, our membership could choose to rate and possibly compete in USPC events.
- Because many pony clubs have expressed interest in using vaulting techniques as a way of improving riding seat for USPC members regardless of discipline, USPC views us as the one discipline that will help the rider specifically with fitness for riding. Becoming a discipline will reinforce this relationship and increase our visibility for opportunities within the USPC, such as foreign exchanges, etc.

Beth Whillock, founder of Northern Lakes Vaulters, has been involved in the sport in many capacities since 2007. She currently serves as AVA/USPC National Liaison, President of AVA Region V, and District Commissioner of Kimberwicke Pony Club.

American Vaulting Association: al Partnership



What the AVA should do at our March Conference *(voting action items)*

- 1) **Opportunity classes for USPC** – Pass the rules (they should be a separate class); how do we synch up calendars so USPC knows about the fests; settle fees.
- 2) **Joint membership opportunities** – What would they fall under? Any incentives? Can we have a membership that allows them rec status and puts them on the AVA map for a discounted price?
- 3) **Decide a direction** – Confirm we want to be a discipline and proceed with the actions USPC has requested the AVA to complete to get this done (preliminary presentation to USPC board was completed 1/17, need to show grass roots interest in vaulting in USPC by end of 2017, presentation to the board 1/18).
- 4) Get ideas for educational pieces that are needed.

Superfood of 2017: *The Bene*

Your grandmother may have been on to something when she told you to eat chicken noodle soup when you were feeling sick. But what was it about the soup that made it such a powerful healer? It's the broth! But not just any old broth... bone broth.

Bone broth is gaining in popularity; celebrities ranging from super models like Giselle Bundchen to pro athletes like Kobe Bryant are singing its praises. So is this superfood all it's cracked up to be? The answer is a resounding yes! In fact, this super elixir is actually a very traditional food that our ancestors have been drinking and cooking with for generations. It is used widely all over the world for its awesome healing properties. Bone broth has stood the test of time and is here to stay.

So what exactly is bone broth? Bone broth is made from simmering raw animal bones (chicken, beef, fish, etc.) in purified water for a 24-hour period with a touch of apple cider vinegar that helps draw out the minerals from the bones. Although traditional aromatics (like vegetables or herbs) are sometimes added for flavor, the real super star is what comes from the bones, the minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphorous, and sulfur, as well as gelatin and collagen, which help with bone and joint health as well as improving skin elasticity. Bone broth helps heal the gut, fights inflammation, is a great source of easily digestible protein, and supports the immune system with its easily-assimilated vitamins and minerals. All in all, it supports the body inside and out and is a great addition to anyone's diet, especially athletes.

Bone broth is a great addition to a vaulter's diet. With the physical demands of a life filled with practices, conditioning and cross training, vaulters can benefit from bone broth's help in healing muscles. It also helps protect the joints and heal inflammation and swelling from the physical demands vaulters put on their bodies on a daily basis.

In addition to these benefits, bone broth is also delicious, which makes it an easy addition to your diet. You can simply drink it like a tea, with some fresh herbs, lemon and sea salt. You can also make a soup with it or use it to cook your grains like brown rice or quinoa (the broth will actually make the grains more easily digestible).

With the growing popularity of bone broth, it's readily available in most health food stores. You will find the good stuff in the freezer section. I recommend The Flavor Chef and Bonafide brands. Basically, you need to be sure that you are purchasing quality broth made from pasture-raised, grass-fed, organic bones. You will know it's good when you can see the thick gelatin as you heat it in the pot, versus the watery boxed or canned type. It's also very easy and cost effective to make bone broth yourself if you have a crock-pot (see the recipe below).

So give this traditional superfood a try and see for yourself the healing benefits that your grandmother knew about all along.

Healing Chicken Bone Broth

- 5 lbs organic raw chicken bones
- 2 Tbsp raw apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp Celtic or Himalayan sea salt
- Herbs and spices to taste (ex. basil, oregano, cayenne, parsley, etc.)

Place all ingredients in a standard 6-quart slow cooker and fill to the top with filtered water. Turn on low and cook for 24 hours. After cooking, strain the fat and solids and save the broth. Use immediately, or freeze in batches to store for later use.

*You can ask for raw chicken bones at the meat counter. If they have them, ask for chicken feet and necks as part of the mix. As gross as this may sound, they contain the most collagen, which is helpful for protein synthesis and nourishing your skin, hair and nails!

Ginny Quick is an accomplished international vaulter and coach. She is a USC graduate with a degree in fine arts, and is currently studying to become a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner through the NTA. Ginny is also a certified Pilates instructor and has been helping people achieve their health and fitness goals for the past 9 years.

Benefits of Bone Broth

By **Ginny Quick**



CHANGE *is in the* AIR

by **Glenye Oakford**

Change was in the air this year at the United States Equestrian Federation's annual meeting, which took place in Lexington, Ky., January 11-14, 2017.

As part of the sweeping strategic plan that USEF President Murray Kessler presented to the membership on January 11, the 100-year-old National Governing Body for equestrian sport now has a new look, including a new consumer-facing brand: US Equestrian. But the makeover is more than skin deep. Kessler unveiled an organization that is more agile and strongly focused on members' and affiliate organizations' needs, with an inclusive spirit that's vital to its vision: to bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible. The overall idea is to grow equestrian sport—and membership—for all breeds and disciplines.

The potential for growth, as Kessler pointed out, is enormous: the U.S. horse industry involves 4.6 million Americans overall, including 1.9 million horse owners with 2.7 million show horses. But only 4% of those 1.9 million horse owners are members of the United States Equestrian Federation, and most of those members are competing members. Reaching out to non-competing equestrians and creating more fan engagement—including a new \$25 US Equestrian fan membership that allows access to the USEF Network, among other benefits—are two strategies Kessler outlined. And thanks in part to a new agreement giving 20,000 Pony Club members and scholastic/intercollegiate association members a free one-year US Equestrian membership, the organization's membership currently is above 100,000 for the first time.

One of the most important keys to growth is closer collaboration with affiliates, like the American Vaulting Association, Kessler pointed out. In its research over the last year, US Equestrian found that about 57,000 of its affiliates' 140,000 combined members had not joined the organization. Kessler noted that US Equestrian is committed to providing more value to affiliate organizations and their members through a variety of efforts.

Among those initiatives is an online Learning Center that is part of the new US Equestrian website www.USequestrian.org. The revamped website went live in January with 35 Learning Center videos and supplemental resources. The Learning Center's current menu includes everything from breed and discipline overviews, to introductory how-to videos designed to help newcomers

get involved in horse sports, to more advanced topics of interest like microchipping and expert horse care and training tips. And those educational offerings will continue to expand. These provide opportunities for affiliates like the AVA to educate newcomers about their sports and pick up new members—a link to the AVA will accompany any future Learning Center material pertaining to vaulting, for example. Affiliate breeds and sports also will appear in the new-look US Equestrian magazine and "US Equestrian Weekly" digital newsletter, whose editorial focus will be on inclusion, education, and the celebration of variety in horse sports and breeds. These promotional tools present an excellent opportunity to highlight the AVA, vaulting participants, and the sport's horses.

Sports like vaulting also are showcased in a new ad campaign, "Discover the Joy of Horse Sports," which celebrates the horse-human bond all equestrians share. The campaign includes all USEF-recognized breeds and disciplines and is designed to showcase the emotional lift, diversity, and benefits of equestrian sports (like self-esteem, leadership, and community) to help grow participation in those sports, through US Equestrian and affiliates like the AVA.

Kessler noted that the USEF is also streamlining its procedures and committee structure. It is implementing changes that will help everyone from affiliates to competition organizers. These include reducing the number of FEI committees; addressing affiliates' concerns over a shortage of licensed officials; bringing back a printed Rule Book; providing more educational opportunities for members, licensed officials, and USEF staff; making the hearing process more transparent and less adversarial; working to make access to USEF competitions more affordable for more participants; and making it easier for competition organizers to navigate USEF systems and rules.

"It's a complete make-over of the USEF," Kessler said, "with Learning Centers and clinics and a new website and process improvements, a new membership category and a new advertising campaign, rolling membership and more meaningful benefits, and later in the year, we'll have apps. And all of that's got to turn around and deliver a measurable increase in revenue, members, more equestrian events on television, growing prize money, more sponsorship, more volunteer engagement. We're going to be tough on ourselves and measure them."

Glenye Cain Oakford is US Equestrian's senior content editor, based in Lexington, Ky.

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