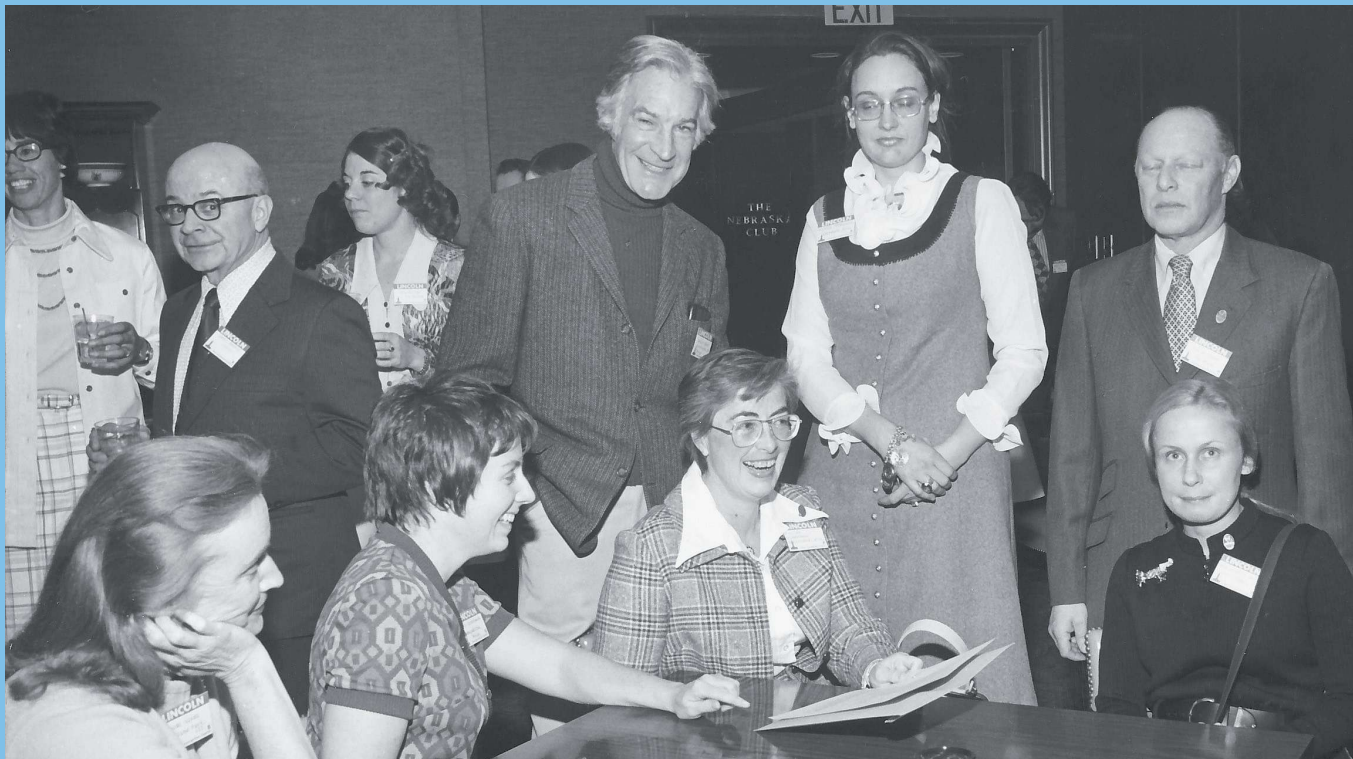




# CELEBRATING 40 YEARS



GATHERED FOR A COMMON CAUSE: USDF founding members gather in Lincoln, NE. Standing, from left: Unidentified, Lowell Boomer (NE), unidentified, Gail Batten (IA), Chuck Grant (MI), Elyse Roberts (IL), Michael Mathews (MI). Seated, from left: June Adams (IL), Jinx Goodwin (MI), Lillian Zimmerman (MI), Carole Grant Oldford (MI).

## USDF Notes from Lincoln

Here's how the USDF was formed. Reprinted from *Dressage & CT*, April 1973.

BY IVAN I. BEZUGLOFF JR.

**A**s I reported in my editorial last month, the meeting held by the Temporary Committee on National Dressage activities, called in Lincoln, Nebraska, for February 17 and 18, resulted in the establishment of a national dressage organization: the UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION. Today I would like to report about the meeting itself.

The organization of the meeting was placed squarely on the shoulders of Lowell Boomer, the highly likeable Nebraskan with a long history in equestrian organizational activities and most recently, the moving spirit behind the newly established Nebraska Dressage Association. The idea to organize the meeting in Lincoln, which is located only 60 miles from the geographical center of the nation, was

first brought up at the meeting on September 16, 1972, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. There were some objections to this, as the location was considered less accessible than the other alternative, Chicago's O'Hare complex. But eventually Lincoln won, and 70 representatives of local and regional organizations as well as involved individuals not affiliated with any organization, descended upon Lincoln. Actually, it may have been only 69, since the Cleveland Hopkins Airport was closed down by a snow storm all day Friday, February 16, and I was able to reach Lincoln only late Saturday afternoon when the proceedings were already in full swing.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Boomer who welcomed the participants and introduced a representative of Lincoln's mayor Sam Schwartzkopff, Mr. Edward Schwartz-

kopff, who in turn greeted the meeting on behalf of the mayor. After this, Mrs. Sally O'Connor (past president of the Potomac Valley Dressage Association) introduced John Fritz (past president of the Eastern States Dressage Association and member of the AHSA Dressage Committee) as the chairman of the meeting. This, in my opinion, was a very lucky choice because his skill and tact as a chairman was greatly instrumental in the success of the meeting. First on the agenda were some procedural matters, mainly the voting procedure. After some discussion it was decided that each participant of the meeting would have one vote plus, in cases where the voting would not result in a clear-cut majority situation, each official delegate from a local or regional organization would have another vote. Then a second round of votes would be cast and the results totaled.

Until the end of Saturday's meeting, there were 18 organizations represented, namely:

- California Dressage Society (Stephen Schwartz)
- Central States Dressage & CT Association (Mrs. Rodgers)
- Delaware Valley CT Association (Mrs. Forbes)
- Eastern States Dressage Association (Mrs. Knocke)
- Equestrians, Inc. (Mrs. Dodd)
- Florida Dressage Society (Col. Kimball)
- Indiana Dressage Society (Mr. Kirtley)
- Illinois Dressage Association (Mrs. Adams)
- Kansas City Dressage Society (Mrs. Rigdon)
- Long Island Dressage & CT Association (Capt. Geissler)
- Midwest Dressage Association (Mrs. Zimmermann)
- Nebraska Dressage Association (Mr. Boomer)
- New England Dressage Association (Mrs. Fitzwilliams)
- Ohio Valley Dressage & CT Association (Mrs. Meredith)
- Potomac Valley Dressage Association (Mrs. O'Connor)
- Rocky Mountain Dressage Society (Mrs. Lent)
- Texas Dressage Society (Mrs. Russell)
- Westchester-Fairfield Dressage Society (Mrs. Serrell)

Also represented was the AHSA Dressage Committee, whose Vice-Chairman, Harden Crawford III, of Gladstone, NJ, delivered a detailed report on the plans of the Dressage Committee. In a similar way, Mr. Fritz explained fully the functions of the AHSA<sup>1</sup>, USET<sup>2</sup> and the USCTA<sup>3</sup>, thus helping to clarify for many of the participants that the proposed dressage organization would not be in competition with, but would rather complement the work carried on by these organizations.

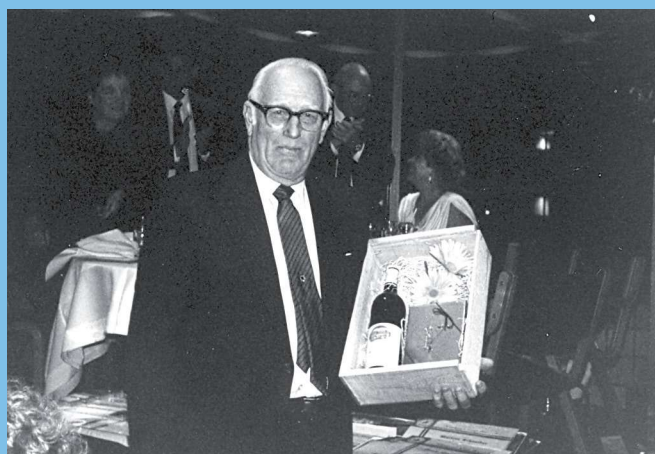
1 American Horse Shows Association (now United States Equestrian Federation)

2 United States Equestrian Team (now United States Equestrian Team Foundation)

3 United States Combined Training Association (now United States Eventing Association)



MADAM PRESIDENT: USDF founding member Lazelle Knocke (NJ) went on to serve as USDF president and later received the USDF Lifetime Achievement Award



WINNER: USDF founding member and Lifetime Achievement Award recipient John "Jack" Kimball (FL) at the 1987 USDF awards banquet

Most of the morning session was devoted to discussing several of the alternatives presenting themselves as models for a national organization. Some of the models proposed that the national organization be patterned after the 10 zone system of the AHSA, while others proposed to organize it on a state-by-state basis. Another suggestion mentioned the California Dressage Society as a possible example, which is presently set up as a zone or region, with its own individual clubs. Still another participant suggested that the new organization be patterned after the USCTA. Finally three formal proposals were read, offered by the California Dressage Society, the Central States Dressage and CT Association and the Potomac Valley Dressage Association. Later that afternoon Stephen Schwartz, president of the CDS, presented a motion to the meeting: "That a national organization be formed, representing the dressage community and cooperating with the AHSA, USET, OEGC (Olympic Equestrian Games Committee) and USCTA." This motion was duly seconded and car-



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**FIRST CONVENTION:** At the inaugural USDF "annual meeting" November 1973: Mary Dodd, Sally O'Connor, Barbara Beck, unidentified, Mary Yates, Tom Poulin, Hardin Crawford III, Arlene Rigdon, Carole Grant Oldford, Chuck Grant, Migi Serrell



**DRINKS AND DRESSAGE:** 1973 Lincoln conventioners A.B. Cudahy, Carl Nicholson, Mary Jean Rogers, Joe Sysel, Sally O'Connor, and Col. Clarence Edmonds



**MOVERS AND SHAKERS:** Karl Mikolka, Elyse Roberts, Jack Fritz, and Mykola Pawlenko at the 1973 inaugural USDF meeting in Lincoln

ried unanimously. It was also decided that two meetings be called later that evening. One, comprising all the delegates from participating organizations, would discuss and formulate several alternate proposals as to the organizational structure of the national organization. The second meeting would discuss the goals of such a national organization.

The Sunday meeting was called to order by Mr. Fritz at 9 AM. First on the agenda was a report by Melanie Lofholm (of the CDS, editor of the CDS DRESSAGE LETTERS and a member of the AHSA Dressage Committee), in which she outlined several proposals worked out by the participants of the meeting on organizational structure. In a very articulate way she presented the various alternatives on such subjects as voting rights in reference to election of officers and adapting and revising by-laws, as well as such matters as dues and executive structure of the organization. She was followed by Mrs. Fritz Coester, who in turn reported on the discussion carried out by the second meeting. Summing up, she stated that the purpose of the new organization should be, first of all, to serve as a voice of the dressage community. It should concern itself with communications, education, standards, and the assurance of implementation. Its function would be to help agencies such as the AHSA, USET etc., by all possible means: supplying them with needed information concerning the desires of the dressage community. As far as education is concerned, the organization should promote dressage as an art in and of itself, through competitions, awards, development of standards, and by the furtherance of seminars and clinics. In short, its final goal should be to develop American horses, trained by Americans and ridden by Americans.

During the discussion that developed, it was proposed that the local and regional organizations represented by an official delegate, be considered as founding members of the new national organization. This motion was seconded and carried. Also, it was moved that an additional organization, namely the Heart of America Dressage Association of Kansas City, Mo., be added to the list of founding members, since it now had an official delegate (who arrived late on Saturday night). This motion was also seconded and carried. As far as new member organizations are concerned, it was decided that applicants for membership must have written procedures or by-laws, filed with the national organization (and not in conflict with the national organization by-laws) and that they must have a minimum of 25 dues-paying members. It was further decided that in addition to member organizations, there should be individual membership, consisting of persons whose dues are paid directly to the national organization and who are not members of any

of the member organizations. Similarly, it was later decided to create the status of “contributing” individual members. Thus the organization will have three types of members: members who have become members because they belong to a member organization: individual members who pay their dues directly to the national organization; and finally, contributing individual members who make sizable contributions to the national organization.

As to the running of the national organization, it was decided that it shall have a Board of Governors that will comprise one representative from each member organization, as well as one representative of the individual members, elected by them from their own midst (if there will be more than 25 such members), to represent their voice and interest. It was further decided that the governors representing their respective constituencies shall have one vote for each 25 dues-paying members of their respective constituencies or a major portion thereof.

Next on the agenda was the selection of a name for the national organization. There were three suggestions: The Dressage Community; American Dressage Federation, and after being duly seconded this motion was carried. This was however, changed a short while later, when Mrs. Serrell, president of the American Dressage Institute asked that in

view of the great similarity with the name of her organization, the motion about the name of the organization be put back on the floor to change the name to the United States Dressage Federation. This motion was then seconded and carried.

Since the Board of Governors will, with time, become a rather large body, it was decided that an Executive Committee, comprising seven members, shall be elected by the Board from among its members. As far as the dues are concerned, it was decided that each member organization shall pay an initiation fee of \$25 plus annual dues of \$1 per voting member. Individual members of the USDF will pay an annual dues of \$15.

With the major aspects of the organizational structure resolved, two motions were placed on the floor, seconded and carried. The first was made by John Kimball (Florida Dressage Society), and it called for “the 19 official delegates, representing the 19 member organizations in attendance at this meeting, to be constituted as a temporary committee to act as a ‘steering committee’ to get the Federation under way, and until such a time as a Board of Governors is elected by the members of the Federation.” The second motion was introduced by Mr. Schwartz as follows: “that the temporary steering committee of 19 appoint a temporary legislative

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AHEAD OF HER TIME: USDF founding member Migi Serrell at the 1978 USDF convention. Her American Dressage Institute was the closet to a national dressage academy the US has had.



THREE YEARS IN: Kay Meredith, who became president in 1977; Ivan Bezugloff Jr., USDF's first treasurer; and outgoing president Stephen Schwartz at the 1976 convention



ALL ABOARD! First USDF president Stephen Schwartz and USDF founder Lowell Boomer on a cable car at a San Francisco convention

committee of five (5), who are not necessarily members of the steering committee, to work on legislative tasks, such as drawing up the constitution and by-laws, and conducting any other such business as is necessary to get the Federation officially established as soon as possible."

This concluded the meeting. Shortly after the meeting was adjourned, the temporary Board of Governors of the USDF (steering committee) met with 18 of the 19 members present (not present was the representative of the Heart of America Dressage Association). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Schwartz, as temporary chairman. Mrs. Dodd was asked to act as temporary recording secretary, and Mr. Boomer was

asked to act as temporary secretary-treasurer. Mr. Boomer and Mrs. Mary Jean Rogers, who throughout the meeting acted, together with Mrs. Gladys Boomer, as recording secretaries, will answer questions and be a liaison to the dressage community. All inquiries should be directed to:

UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION  
Lowell Boomer, Secretary-Treasurer pro tem  
[address]

Also, all individual membership applications should be directed to Mr. Boomer.

The next business on the agenda of the meeting was the appointment of the temporary legislative committee of five which will comprise Mrs. Lofholm (chairman), Mrs. Serrell, Mrs. Zimmermann, Mrs. O'Connor and Mr. Boomer. The meeting also discussed some of the immediate projects and aims of the Federation. We will return to these in a later report.

In general I would like to say that prospects for success of the new organization are bright. It should, however, be remembered that only a very little step has been taken thus far, and only a facade was created. It will take a combined effort on the part of the American dressage community as a whole to put something solid behind this facade, so that it will not fall down with the first gust of wind. I believe that the realization of the many tasks and goals before the USDF, will demand that all the talent available and willing to work on its behalf, be mobilized and put to work. It also will be of utmost importance that all the activities of the temporary steering committee and of the temporary legislative committee be promptly publicized, so that the community is kept up to date with the developments. Only if this is done will the dressage people in this country support the USDF wholeheartedly.



**'NUFF SAID:** *New England Dressage Association past president Paul Cormier at the 2002 USDF convention*

One more thing: All those of our readers who are not presently members of a local or regional organization, should either join one in their area or should consider becoming individual members of the United States Dressage Federation. It is important that all of us join this organization, so as to assure a bright future for America's dressage! ▲

*This article originally appeared in the April 1973 issue of Dressage & CT magazine. The USDF is grateful to Natalia*



**FREESTYLE FOCUS:** *To usher in 2002, USDF's "Year of the Freestyle," the 2001 convention featured a panel with freestyle experts Kay Meredith, Tom Noone, Sue Blinks, and Janet Foy*

*Bezugloff, widow of author and D&CT publisher/editor Ivan I. Bezugloff Jr., for granting permission to reprint this article.*

*Editor's note:* Although the decision to create the USDF was made in February 1973, what's considered the actual founding meeting and inaugural business proceedings were held in November of that year. That's why we celebrate USDF's anniversary in November.

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