

Meet the Candidates

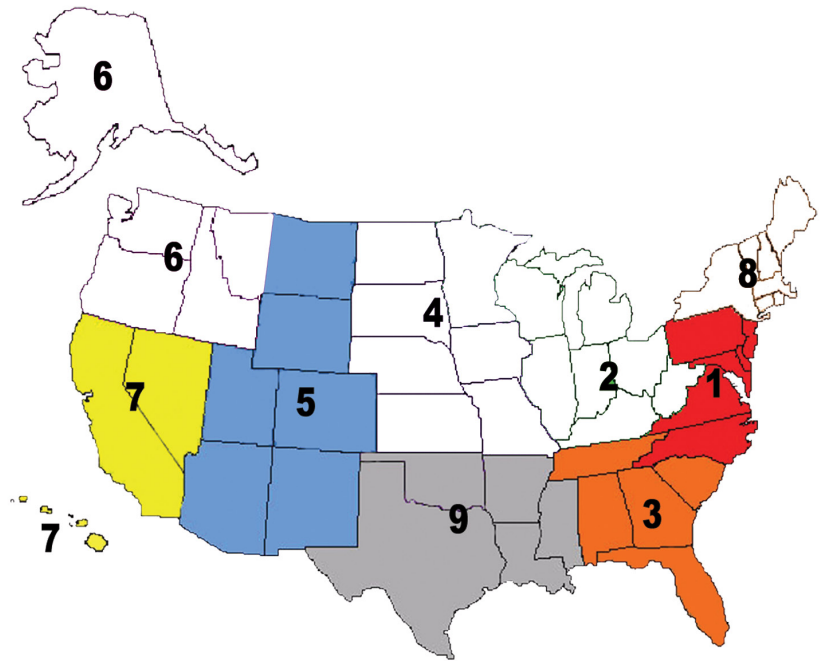
Get to know who's nominated for USDF Executive Board office this year

During the 2022 Adequan®/USDF National Convention this December, the USDF Board of Governors will elect seven USDF Executive Board members: USDF vice president and secretary, as well as directors of USDF's odd-numbered regions (1, 3, 5, 7, and 9).

Two officer positions are up for election. Current USDF vice president Kevin Reinig of California is running for another term. Longtime USDF secretary Margaret Freeman of North Carolina is stepping down at the end of 2022, and the USDF extends its sincere thanks for her years of dedicated service. Debra Reinhardt of Connecticut, a former Region 8 director, is running for the open secretary's seat.

USDF's regional directors represent the members of the organization's nine regions (see map) on the Executive Board. Incumbents Bettina Longaker of Virginia (Region 1), Heather Petersen of Colorado (Region 5), Carol Tice of California (Region 7), and Bess Bruton of Texas (Region 9) are running for reelection. In Region 5, Susan Skripac of Arizona is challenging Petersen for that director's seat. And in Region 3, longtime director Susan Bender of South Carolina is stepping down at year's end. The USDF is grateful for her many years of service. Running for the open Region 3 seat is current USDF Historical Recognition Committee chair Charlotte Trentelman of Florida.

Additional nominations for vice president, secretary, and regional directors in Regions 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 will be accepted from the floor of the 2022 Board of Governors General Assembly.



ODD YEAR: Up for election are the directors of USDF's odd-numbered regions

Like all organizations, USDF needs committed leadership in order to enjoy continued growth and thoughtful direction. The USDF Executive Board functions as a cohesive team and strives to further the organization's mission and goals. For the 2022 election cycle, the USDF Nominating Committee asked each candidate to submit a brief biography and to answer a series of questions.

Officer candidates

The president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer are officer positions. The candidates for USDF vice president and secretary were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. *What special professional or technical skills would you bring to the Executive Board to help implement the strategic plan of the organization (e.g., financial, legal, business, management, technology,*

human resources)?

2. *How has your involvement in local, regional, and national USDF activities promoted and enhanced dressage, both regionally and nationally?*

3. *What specific goals and objectives do you have for USDF?*

4. *How will you, as an officer, encourage greater member participation and help to make USDF the "go to" organization for dressage in the United States?*

The candidates' responses follow.

VICE PRESIDENT

Incumbent:
Kevin Reinig
My wife, Ericka, and I have a dressage business, training horses and riders of all levels and



USDF ILLUSTRATION: CCOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

traveling to many shows, including the Young Horse Championships and the US Dressage Finals. I feel I bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the board and look forward to continuing my service on the USDF board to progress the sport of dressage.

At 15, I started working at a local Hanoverian breeding farm. I worked my way through high school and then college, earning a finance degree. In college I was hired at a community bank. I enjoyed my work at the bank, but I missed the horses, so I went back to the breeding farm, eventually starting our own dressage training business.

I served for nine years on the Executive Board of the California Dressage Society (CDS), six of those as president. While on the CDS board I served on many committees, including as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee and of the Championship Show Committee.

I am the current USDF vice president, and I sit on the USDF Regional Championships Committee, serve on the US Dressage Finals Organizing Committee, and serve on the US Equestrian Dressage Sport Committee. As we move forward, navigating the issues surrounding the pandemic, EHV-1, and using our new communication channels to keep our members informed, it has been great working with USDF to keep dressage moving in a positive direction. I look forward to continuing my service on the USDF Executive Board.

Responses to questions:

1. I have a strong background in finance and business management. I have worked in the horse industry for over 30 years. My wife and I have owned and operated our dressage training business for 18 years.

2. My work on the CDS board and as USDF vice president keeps me in touch with what is going on in the

sport of dressage and the direction the membership would like to see the sport develop. I am constantly looking for ways for the GMOs to support the national programs and work with other GMOs to coordinate their programs that promote dressage.

3. My goal is to improve communication with dressage enthusiasts, using social and classic media outlets to help them see that the best way they can support and progress the sport of dressage is through membership in both USDF and their local GMO.

4. I want members to think of their USDF membership as so much more than a way to access education, competition, and awards opportunities. Dressage enthusiasts need to look at USDF membership as a way for them to do their part in shaping the direction and future of the sport of dressage, both here in the United States and internationally.

SECRETARY

Candidate: Debra Reinhardt

I have been competing horses since 1981, starting in the hunter world. By 1988

I had completely changed to dressage and bought my first dressage horse. I have continued to compete and have won many year-end awards, including my USDF bronze and silver medals. Besides being an adult-amateur competitor, I am also a US Equestrian "R" technical delegate.

Managing shows has been a passion of mine for the past 25 years. I have managed some of the biggest dressage shows, and I started the CDI3* Darien, Connecticut, which became the CDI-W Saugerties, New York. I ran the American Bankers Insurance Group/USDF Region 8



Championships for five years, and now I'm very involved with running the Great American/USDF Region 8 Championships. In addition, I have been involved in the US Dressage Finals for six years as the event coordinator, and then as the show manager.

My experience with the USDF started in the early 1990s as chair of the Marketing Committee, where I championed the High School Lettering Program and created the Membership Committee. In addition, I have been a member of the USDF TD Council and Freestyle Committee, chair of the FEI Managers Committee, USDF Region 8 director for nine years, and I am presently vice-chair of the Competition Management Committee.

My wonderful husband, Steve, who is the best show secretary (I am a bit prejudiced!), and my incredible son, Robert, make my life complete!

See you on the center line.

Responses to questions:

1. While many people may think of me as a show manager/secretary, as I have run my business, Centerline Events, since 1996, I bring much more experience than competition management. I am an adult-amateur competitor and a licensed "R" technical delegate. In addition, my experience as associate publisher of *Dressage Today* magazine allows me to bring my knowledge about publishing to the Executive Board.

2. I was on the USDF Executive Board for nine years as Region 8 director. I was the event coordinator of the US Dressage Finals for the first four years and then became show manager, during which time I learned more about how the office and USDF in general operate. On a more local level, I manage Dressage4Kids' Youth Dressage Festival, which hosts the USDF Junior/Young Rider Team Competitions, and for

over 20 years I have either managed or been secretary for the Great American/USDF Region 8 Championships. I have run two USEF “S” Judge Promotion Programs along with judges forums, and have another judge program set to start in January 2023.

3. I would like to help USDF be the only place to go to get knowledge, education, find instructors, competitions, and every aspect of dressage information.

4. We need to provide our members with more opportunities to communicate with the Executive Board. With the use of Zoom, we can hold “town meetings.” We can encourage the membership to communicate with the officers and regional directors via e-mail.

Regional-director candidates

The candidates for regional director were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. *What special professional or technical skills (e.g., financial, legal, business, management, technology, human resources) would you bring to the Executive Board to help implement the strategic plan of the organization?*

2. *How has your involvement in local, regional, and national USDF activities promoted and enhanced dressage, both regionally and nationally?*

3. *What specific goals and objectives do you have for USDF and your region if you should be elected regional director?*

4. *How will you, as a regional director, encourage greater participation by each member within your region?*

REGION 1

Incumbent: Bettina Longaker

With more than four decades of experience in horse ownership, riding, competition management, and GMO

leadership, current Region 1 director Bettina Longaker looks forward to continuing to serve the region for her third term.

Bettina has run USDF Youth and Adult Team Competitions, FEI North American Junior/Young Rider Championships (now NAYC) competitions, USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized dressage competitions, Great American/USDF Regional Championships, and the US Dressage Finals. She has also served as president of two Virginia Dressage Association (VADA) chapters and VADA itself.

Raised in Ithaca, New York, Bettina’s formal training as a rider started at Cornell University with Charles “Chuck” Lent. She credits Chuck as instrumental in preparing her for dressage by teaching her the balanced seat at a time when the forward half-seat was becoming popular. He also hired her when she was 17, making her the youngest instructor in the Cornell Equitation Department.

After moving to Virginia in 1976, Bettina earned a BS in information systems from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her interest and training in dressage ensued, and she earned a USDF bronze medal in 1985 and became a USDF L graduate with distinction in 1993. That same year, she volunteered to work as secretary at one of the largest East Coast dressage shows at the time, paving the way for many more years of volunteering.

Today Bettina lives in Somerset, Virginia, where she operates her business, Scripts & Rides LLC. She looks forward to remaining active in USDF governance as the organization takes on its new role in educat-



ing USEF dressage officials and writing the US dressage tests.

Responses to questions:

1. With my background in information technology, both professionally and in my dressage work, I have honed my skills in working with different personality types. This gives me invaluable insight into the confusion that many feel with the never-ending evolving technology, especially after the COVID pandemic and the change to all-online entries.

2. For the past four decades I have run the gambit of shows, from schooling shows to the US Dressage Finals. Involvement from the ground up has helped me understand the needs of the varying levels of dressage riders across our nation. We have to remember that as show management, we are service providers who have the responsibility to help our riders understand their obligations to themselves, and to understand the requirements they must fulfill to succeed in their dressage endeavors.

3. I still have two large concerns: “Who will take over for the aging generation?” and “Are we doing enough for the everyday competitor in today’s world?” I will continue to solicit from my region’s members their views and opinions and to share their views at the Executive Board level.

4. Everyone says it: Communication is the primary tool we have to encourage active participation. In this busy world of e-mails, texts, and social media, I have tried to communicate efficiently without bombarding my region’s members to distraction, while always being available for their inquiries.

REGION 3

Candidate: Charlotte Trentelman

Charlotte Trentelman is a US Equestrian “S” dressage judge from Ocala, Florida. She helped develop

shows on the early Florida circuit as a manager, secretary, trainer, technical delegate, and judge. She has competed with



numerous breeds in dressage since 1976. She currently chairs the USDF Historical Recognition Committee.

She worked as a local organizer for the USDF National Symposium in Orlando, Florida, for the years it was held there.

Prior to 2000, Charlotte served two terms as USDF Region 3 director. She has attended 30 USDF annual conventions, often as a participating-member delegate.

When not on the road judging, she enjoys volunteering with local organizers of USDF L programs. She feels that USDF has the best educational system for dressage in the world.

Responses to questions:

1. I am task oriented and a team player. I have experience in many different aspects of dressage and USDF.

2. I have been involved with the USDF Historical Recognition Committee for almost all of the years of its existence and presently am the chair. I have served as president and vice president of my local GMO, STRIDE; organized shows; and helped with educational programs.

3. I feel that we have had a great regional director in Sue Bender, and I want to carry forward the programs that she has put into action. Region 3 covers a lot of territory, and all of it needs to benefit from USDF programs. Making our members feel that their voices are heard is very important.

4. I will reach out to all the GMOs and identify a liaison that we can call on to let us know what their

clubs' problems and needs are.

I want to have committee members who are visible and approachable to the region for all categories of members.

Also, I want to network with these people to identify members who want to participate in programs and the annual convention. Many have voiced a need for fresh ideas to come to the convention. I'd like to try to make this happen.

REGION 5

Incumbent: Heather Petersen

Heather Petersen was born and raised in

Dubuque, Iowa. She attended college at Iowa State University, earning degrees in music (oboe



performance) and animal science. She met and married her husband, Michael, during college and moved to Colorado soon after. They have two children, Elizabeth and Sarah, and a menagerie of animals on their farm. Before working in the horse-show industry, Heather worked in restaurant management with the McDonalds Corporation and private franchises.

Heather is an active amateur dressage competitor; mother of two active Jr/YR dressage competitors; a USEF "R" technical delegate; an FEI Level 1 steward; a current or past member of several USDF and USEF committees; and a member of show management of USDF Regional Championships, Rocky Mountain Dressage Society (RMDS) Championships, and CDIs. She is the secretary/manager for many other successful national competitions, schooling shows, and local shows as well as an RMDS past president, education chair, and current sec-

retary. She has organized USDF L programs, USEF "r" dressage judge programs, and several educational symposiums. She has also served several years as a USDF Region 5 NAYC *chef* and enjoys organizing the USDF Region 5 FEI Jr/YR Clinics. Volunteering is one of the best ways we can give back to the sport of dressage.

In her spare time, Heather loves to ride her horses, read lots of books, and hang out with her family and animals. She has enjoyed getting to show in other parts of the region in recent years and connecting with the Region 5 membership.

Responses to questions:

1. While on the board of the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society, and in my previous terms serving on the USDF Executive Board and several other large nonprofit organizations, I've worked through budgeting, restructuring, long-term planning, and membership retention. Managing restaurants and my own horse-show management business has given me experience in management, cost analysis, and budgeting, as well as an awareness of the importance of teamwork.

2. Having served and currently serving on quite a few USDF and USEF committees, I have helped to provide valuable resources for dressage competitions and competitors. By organizing judging programs and other educational programs, I have worked to increase the dressage knowledge base. I've enjoyed working with our juniors and young riders, helping grow the sport and create potential open and adult-amateur competitors.

3. I would like to see USDF maintain and develop more diverse educational programs to meet the changing needs of our membership. Helping educate our instructors will strengthen our sport from the bottom to the top, including our

amateurs and youth.

For our region, I will focus on keeping up good communication, finding more potential venues for our Regional Championships, and helping our diverse membership meet their goals.

4. I will continue to encourage more involvement in USDF regional and national activities as well as GMO programs. I would like to see more of our GMOs offering newsletters to their membership that can be shared throughout our region to spread ideas and encourage cross-participation in events.

Candidate: Susan Skripac

Born in Youngstown, Ohio, I have been riding and a student of horses since 1962. I have been a 4-H member, club president, advisor, and horse-judging coach in both Ohio and New York. I have owned and shown Quarter Horses, Appaloosas, Arabians, grades, and now Friesian Sporthorses/Georgian Grandes. I have been a devotee of dressage since 1992 and now of working equitation.



In addition to chairing the Cooperative Extension Board in Oswego County, New York, and the faculty assembly/senate of the State University of New York at Oswego for seven years, I was president of the Central New York Dressage and Combined Training Association, and a board member of the Dallas Dressage Club. I am currently a board member and futurity chair for the Arizona Dressage Association. I have volunteered at many dressage shows, the American Eventing Championships, the World Equestrian Games, and the US Dressage Finals. I've learned much from each of these experiences.

I am a retired associate professor of vocational teacher education from SUNY Oswego and have also taught online for Texas A&M Commerce and the University of Arizona. I was a pioneer in online teacher education in SUNY, and I encouraged many educators to expand to traditional and nontraditional students through a variety of teaching mediums.

I currently give about 20 riding lessons per week and manage my Friesian Sporthorse Association/Georgian Grande stallion, Wallace G, in his journey to Grand Prix with Taylor Lindsten in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Responses to questions:

1. I taught using videoconferencing in its infancy and then online since 1998. I chaired the faculty assembly at SUNY Oswego and was well respected for my organizational and collegial ways in collaborating with a highly opinionated group of academics and professional staff.

I listen in order to gather information and solve problems, and to develop systems that work well. I listen to learn. I listen to help. I listen and think.

2. Each GMO of which I have been a member has encountered similar issues: membership, volunteerism, appropriate event venues, and youth participation. I look for old and new ideas to help the organization better serve its members. This is difficult, as professionals' goals differ from those of adult amateurs and youth. Education and community are foremost in my mind. But a GMO must balance raising funds with providing education and service—a challenge, to be sure. When you meet me, ask me about my three mantras.

3. Balance the geographically vast region with services, virtual seminars, and in-person horse shows and clinics; and increase social interaction such that learning is a natural outcome. Make each member of a

region understand their place and that they can expect something from being a member.

4. Have quarterly Zoom/virtual calls with questions submitted before and during the call, and Zoom participation in regional meetings. Write/e-mail GMO members and engage in conversation of their choosing. Many members join and want more but do not always know what they want. Region 5 is large, our states have pockets of us, and some members live and ride far from these pockets.

REGION 7

Incumbent: Carol Tice

I started dressage to improve my Western horses and never left! My lessons started with a person recommended by the instructor at my soon-to-be husband's boarding stable, Sherry Guess. Her tutelage and recommendations on continuing my dressage and riding education continue today.



Through Sherry, I became involved with my local chapter of the California Dressage Society (CDS). Since then I've volunteered in every aspect of producing a show, on my local chapter board, and on the CDS Executive Board as a regional director, vice president, and president. When I was not to continue on the CDS EB, I found myself becoming more involved with USDF than just being on the GMO Committee, and I was elected as Region 7 director.

My days are normally busy with shared duties alongside my husband, Jim, taking care of our riding-school horses, his hobby farm of registered miniature Herefords, and my helpful goat, along with two dogs and a somewhat feral cat.

I have been the volunteer co-

ordinator at the four-ring Del Mar (California) National Dressage Show for many years and for the Great American/USDF Region 7 Championships/CDS Championships. I've used dressage theory for all of my students, both English and Western, for my over 30 years of teaching beginners and competing riders. While my dream of riding a Prix St. Georges test has yet to be realized, my horses are happy learning and moving up the levels using the training scale, albeit in a Western saddle these days.

Responses to questions:

1. I have been involved with managing and running my husband's and my small business for 35 years. Before that I was an outside sales rep, which required finding and keeping new clients.

2. Through my involvement with my GMO at the local, state, and national levels, and having served on various USDF committees and special task-force working groups, I feel that the main focus has been how to recruit and maintain interested riders in dressage. Listening to the members, bringing their requests and needs to the governing bodies of these organizations, and supporting their ideas have proved productive in producing new programs.

3. My goal is to help increase GMO membership within my region and to work on the communication lines between GMO members and USDF.

4. Considering that many members are comfortable with the status quo of programs and offerings by both USDF and their GMOs, I'd like to continue work on committees that develop new member programs and update current ones.

REGION 9

Incumbent: Bess Bruton

From the time I could walk, I have been fascinated with horses. One of my first books was about the Spanish

Riding School of Vienna and the Lipizzan stallions. I knew about the levade at age six and wished that my Shetland pony



would cooperate. Alas, he just rolled in the sand or headed for the nearest tree branch.

I attended a Houston Dressage Society meeting sometime in the late 1970s. Soon after, I started taking lessons and going to clinics, devouring as much knowledge as possible about dressage.

Showing followed, with my first "10" for a halt at my first recognized show. Fast-forward 30 years to earning my USDF bronze and silver medals.

I've been involved in horses pretty much my whole life, from behind the scenes at shows and clinics to serving on national, regional, and GMO committees and boards, including as USDF Region 9 director.

I have owned and operated a horse farm, worked as a trainer/instructor, am an L graduate, and have written equine-related articles. Outside the equine industry, I have worked as a certified yoga teacher/trainer, a home ec teacher, in retail sales, as a dog trainer, and in the oil and gas business. In my spare time I enjoy painting, working with clay and glass, fishing, and hiking.

The beauty I saw in that children's book about the Lipizzan stallions still rings true today. I hope that dressage will be here at least another 500 years so others can be fascinated, intrigued, and fall in love.

Responses to questions:

1. I'm told I am very organized, a good listener, levelheaded, and can analyze and think through problems. Administration is not for

everyone, but I enjoy it.

I've owned or been involved with several types of businesses, all of which have given me good life experience. That varied knowledge helps in good decision making.

2. I've been involved with dressage at the GMO level since the 1970s—from videographer, volunteer at shows, show secretary/manager, USDF L graduate, and braiding manes to competing through FEI. I have also organized clinics and trained and taught horses and riders.

I'm a past GMO president and have worked on numerous committees.

I have been involved with USDF at the regional and national level since the 1990s. I served several years as a PM or GMO delegate and on national committees, and I'm a past and current Region 9 director.

The many hats I've worn through the last 40-plus years have, I hope, helped to promote passion and love for dressage and the horse.

3. To listen and hear members' needs, and to remember those needs as executive decisions are made. All goals and objectives should be based on what is best for our members. They are the reason for our existence, along with the love for our sport and the horse.

4. Promote events, barn activities, GMOs, the region, and nationally through communication by e-news, website, social media, and so on. Finding out members' wants and needs to assist them in reaching their goals.

