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## United States Para-Equestrian Association



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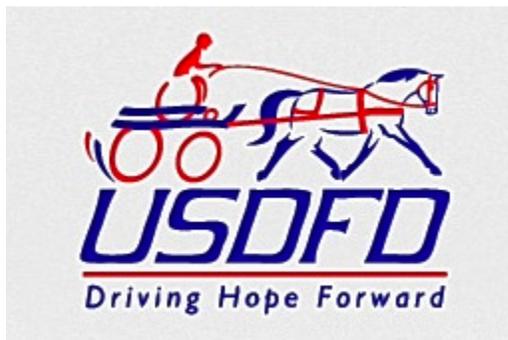
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## United States Para-Equestrian Driving Team Prepares for 2012 World Driving Championships



**July 26, 2012-** As the United States looks forward to the 2012 Paralympics for the United States Para-Equestrian Dressage Team, the Para-Equestrian Driving Team will be preparing for the 2012 Para-Equestrian World Driving Championships, scheduled August 30-September 2, 2012 in Breda, The Netherlands.

**The 2012 USEF Para-Equestrian Driving Team for the World Driving Championships include**

Diane Kastama, Grade 1, from Arroyo Grande, CA;  
Pam Johnson, Grade 2 from Pleasant Hill, MO; and  
Karen Gorham, Grade 2, of Burnet, Texas.

In preparation for this exciting event, the United States Driving for the Disabled (USDfD), which is the Para-Equestrian Driving National Affiliate for the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), works alongside USEF, coaches, drivers, horse owners, and trainers to assist with the many aspects that will affect Para-Drivers.

Beverly White, President of the USDfD noted, "We poll the active Para-Equestrian drivers early in the championship year asking for recommendations for Coach and Chef d'Equipe. We also ask for names to be submitted as selectors. We put together the selection criteria based on previous years and any changes that are made in those two years. All of this is then submitted to the USEF's High Performance Committee for Para-Equestrians for their approval. Once approved, the application and criteria are then sent to the drivers so they may apply to be selected for the team. USDfD keeps track of deadlines and verifies that all appropriate paperwork and fee requirements are met. While this process slowly advances, we are busy locating horses, equipment and facilities in the host country. This can be difficult as we do not really know who will be going until the team is selected. However, we need to have everything organized so that all will fall into place when the time arrives for the team to leave for Europe."

She continued, "Because many of the Para-Equestrian Drivers live on fixed incomes, it can be a financial hardship to compete. We work with many people to get services and equipment donated or at minimal cost. USDfD also applies for grants and seeks donations from raffles to help send the team to the World Championships."

Seven countries and 26 horse and driver combinations will set-forth their best efforts at the 2012 World Driving Championships. As the World Driving Championships approach USEF has announced the nominated entries for the 2012 USEF Para-Equestrian Driving Team.

## **2012 USEF Para-Equestrian Driving Team for the 2012 World Driving Championships:**

1. Diane Kastama Grade 1, Arroyo Grande, CA
2. Pam Johnson Grade 2, Pleasant Hill, MO
3. Karen Gorham Grade 2, Burnet, Texas.



**Diane Kastama**, Arroyo Grande, CA Grade I. In 1991 a car crash left Diane paralyzed from the waist down. Although a lifelong horse person and dressage



enthusiast, riding without the use of her legs was not much fun and she soon turned to driven dressage and then the exciting sport of combined driving. Her relatives and friends thought she was crazy for taking on a sport that involves sitting atop a tall carriage, pulled by

a horse going "hell-bent" for speed.

Diane started competing with her home bred Appaloosa's but now Diane competes with a pair of Section D Welsh Cobs, Rupert and George. She drives them single, pair and tandem. She competes against able-bodied drivers all over the Western United States and occasionally on the East Coast at the Intermediate and Advanced level. Diane has also demonstrated her skills at Rolex, KY, Horse Expo in Sacramento, the "Night of the Horse" in Del Mar. The Equine Affair and various therapeutic horse programs throughout California. She has also participated in the closing ceremonies at the 2006 World Equestrian Games in Aachen, Germany. Diane is always willing to share her skills and knowledge and bring driving to the forefront of equine sports. Diane has been very successful in international Para-Equestrian competition, coming home with an Individual Silver and Team Bronze driving a borrowed Welsh Cob Stallion in 2002 Greven, Germany. 2004 she place 5th with a borrowed Welsh cob in Endinburg, Scotland. In 2006 she came home with Individual Gold driving her own Welsh cob gelding Jasper. In 2008 Diane earned Individual Bronze and Team Silver driving Jasper once again.



**Pam Johnson** and her husband Kelly are the owners of K Bar J Ranch in Pleasant Hill, MO, where they give horse-drawn hay rides at various events. Pam has been involved in an array of different disciplines over her life, competing in everything from Three Day Eventing to Team Roping. Being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis put an end to those days, but that didn't stop her. Pam put a cart and harness on her Christmas

list and began driving. After volunteering at a local CDE she was sure with her vast eventing experience that Combined Driving was something she could do. Pam felt Combined Driving Events were just the ticket to keep her moving and motivated. Driving fulfilled her desire to still be involved with horses allowing her to continue to be competitive, and now fifteen

years later she's still kickin' it! Pam competed as an individual with Team USA in the 2004 IPEC World Championships for Carriage Drivers with Disabilities held in Scotland.

**Karen Gorham** grew up riding horses at her childhood home in Michigan. Both Karen and Bill enjoyed riding but when Bill was taught by Milo Measel to drive, it would be the start of a future career with the driving discipline. After a move in 1967 with her husband Bill the couple settled in Texas. After witnessing Bill Long, an elite driver, in the Four-in-Hand World Championships and numerous other fantastic drivers, Karen and her husband were hooked on the driving discipline. Karen and Bill spent most of the 80's and 90's driving horses, raising their children, and traveling to Combined Driving Events where Bill was a Technical Delegate.



In 2005, when Hurricane Rita came barreling towards Texas it would not only be recorded as one of the most intense hurricanes in weather history, but for Karen and Bill it would be a pinpoint for Karen's future equestrian career as a Para-Equestrian Driver. After an incredible incident involving a truck and horse trailer Karen would live the rest of her life with a prosthetic left arm.

It would be just after the World Equestrian Games in 2010 when Karen would see her first video of a Para-Equestrian Dressage rider. As Bettina Eistel a Para-Equestrian Dressage athlete rode her horse Fabuleax 5 with only her toes, Karen was awestruck by this athlete's determination. Karen noted, "I thought that if she could ride with her toes in Dressage, I can surely drive." From that moment, Karen knew it was her turn to compete. She has traveled the country competing, training, and learning from the top drivers in the world. Throughout the week Karen is consistently training including daily drives with her six-year-old Welsh pony O'Charley, conditioning to keep her horse and herself in peak shape, and attending clinics and horse shows. As the World Para-Equestrian Driving Championships approaches, she is looking forward to representing the United States of America as a Para-Equestrian Driver. Karen commented, "I have so many people to thank all over the United States who have got me to this point. Everyone was so gracious in areas like Windsor, S.C. and Florida, I am in debt to everyone who assisted me as I prepared for my next endeavor. In particular, I wanted to thank Sue Hirzuck for allowing me to lease her pony Tucker. Part of my lease with Sue Hirzuck was that I showed in the Triple Crown of Driving and that her driving pony Tucker maintained his "For Sale" tag. This sweetheart of a pony was a wonderful drive and was sold to a driver in Tennessee just after I leased him. I can't thank Sue enough for lending this wonderful pony to me. It is people like Sue who continue to make the Para-Equestrian Driving sport flourish."

She continued, "I also want to thank the amazing Gerard Paagman, and Hardy Zantke for their encouragement since October 2010. I wouldn't be here without so many wonderful drivers and trainers, my family, and of course the horses. Lastly, I would like to thank Georgie and John Green who gave us the push to pursue this discipline and to everyone who founded and currently run the United States Driving for the Disabled, Thank you!"

### **About Para-Equestrian Driving (courtesy FEI)**

Para-Equestrian Driving competitions are modeled on the ridden Three Day Event. It is a triathlon which tests the overall versatility of the driven horse. Modern Horse Driving Trials came into existence in 1968 when HRH Prince Philip of Great Britain initiated the formulation of the rules for the new sport. Prince Philip is a past President of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) for able-bodied people in all equestrian disciplines.

The competition consists of three phases, spread over three or four days.

#### ***Day 1 Dressage***

Driven dressage consists of a sequence of set movements driven from memory and using mainly the voice for control. Dressage displays the schooling and obedience of the horse.

#### ***Day 2 The Cross Country Marathon with Obstacles***

There are three timed sections plus up to six challenging 'obstacles' to be driven at speed. The stamina of the horses and the horsemanship of the drivers are stretched to the very limit. This section gets the adrenaline pumping and the mud-flying. Carriage Driving is definitely not for the faint hearted.

#### ***Day 3 Cone Driving Competition against the clock.***

Cone driving equates to the Show jumping phase of a ridden event. With only centimeters to spare, cone driving requires extreme accuracy on a tricky course, a steady hand, nerves of steel and a well trained horse.

Each phase of the Driving Trials tests the skill and the nerve of the driver and the fitness, obedience and suppleness of the horse. But above all it tests the bond of complete trust between them both.

Most carriage drivers with disabilities have, for one reason or another, found that riding is not physically possible for them. Their love of horses and their determination to participate in equestrian sport has led them to explore new and equally demanding and exciting equestrian challenges.

Great attention is given to all aspects of safety for the horse and the driver. At all times the driver is accompanied by at least one competent able-bodied person. Traditional elegance is expected, horses, drivers, grooms and carriages are all immaculately turned out.

Organization for this sport is very labor intensive requiring 30-40 volunteer Judges, Stewards, Time keepers, Scorers, Vets, Farriers and many others. However a carriage driving competition for disabled drivers can be easily integrated into a competition for able-bodied drivers. The first three World Championships have been held in conjunction with National Championships for able-bodied drivers in Wolfsburg, Germany in 1998, Stadl Paura, Austria in 2000, Greven, Germany in 2002 and also Hopetown, Scotland in 2004.

### **About the United States Driving for the Disabled, Inc.**

United States Driving for the Disabled, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, seeks to improve the lives of physically challenged individuals throughout the United States and Canada by providing the experience of driving horses in a safe and challenging environment. Our mission is to provide the extraordinary benefit of therapeutic driving to as many people as possible through sharing knowledge, experience, and serving as a resource for innovations in adaptive equipment for drivers, trainers, and programs offering carriage driving. The Sybil Dukehart Memorial Fund seeks to provide financial assistance to equip and train disabled drivers through providing scholarship funds to applicants. USDFD fosters opportunities for drivers to compete in national and international amateur competitions by training and providing financial support for Team USA. For more information please visit [www.USDFD.org](http://www.USDFD.org).

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#### **About United States Para-Equestrian Association:**

The USPEA is a network of riders, judges, national federation board members, and equestrian enthusiasts. The association gives athletes the ability to get involved and expand their knowledge and experience in the Para-Equestrian sport. The USPEA encourages para-athletes to participate in all disciplines under the para-equestrian umbrella.

The USPEA is a recognized affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) which serves as the National Governing Body for the equestrian sport. This relationship between the USPEA and USEF is to encourage para-equestrian competitors, leisure riders, coaches, fans and enthusiasts to network and get involved with the entire equestrian sport.

Ultimately the goal of the USPEA is to foster growth in the para-equestrian discipline. From growth in the number of participants to growth as a team, and growth in the experience and knowledge of all involved. From local horse shows to international Olympic Games, the USPEA will provide para-equestrians the knowledge of what they need to succeed. The USPEA connects with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the United States Dressage Federation (USDF), and USEF which provides Para-Equestrians the top equestrian resources.

In June 2010, the USPEA earned its 501 (c)(3) status which has encouraged supporters to help supply funding to the Para-Equestrian Team as a recognized affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation(USEF).

For more information about the USPEA please visit [www.USPEA.org](http://www.USPEA.org) or contact USPEA President: Hope Hand by e-mail: [Wheeler966@aol.com](mailto:Wheeler966@aol.com) or by phone: (610)356-6481.

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