Give the Gift of EQUESTRIAN VAULTING

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES
3 issues, published Spring, Summer and Winter
Add-on for current AVA Vaulting Fan and Recreational Members
US only: $12 | US non-members: $18

Annual Multi-pack Pricing
for All Current AVA Members and Clubs:
• 5-pack EV Magazine Bundles: $50
  15% off single subscription pricing!
• 10-pack EV Magazine Bundles: $90
  25% off single subscription pricing!
• 20-pack EV Magazine Bundles: $140
  40% off single subscription pricing!

Kristina Boe
World Cup Champion 2018

Manufacturer of vaulting, driving, and riding equipment.

Ekkert und Tanja Meinecke GbR
Braunschweiger Str. 41 • 29358 - Germany
info@sattlerei-meinecke.de • www.sattlerei-meinecke.de

KFS Designs
Custom Design and Sewing for all your athletic Apparel needs!

Kathy Schimack
kfs@rockinradioranch.com 970.980.7053
HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO EVM
We welcome your participation in the magazine. We are happy to consider your story ideas and are also looking for members of the vaulting or horse community to take on writing or photography assignments. If you are interested, please contact Andrea Selch, DirectorMembership@americanvaulting.org.

OUR NEXT PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WILL BE ARABESQUES (free or holding)
Submissions should be high-resolution jpeg files (at least 300 dpi) labeled with the technique and photographer name, e.g., Arabesque-ChrisPhotographer.jpg. Do not email these submissions to the magazine. Instead, contact Andrea Selch or check the AVA Facebook page for a link to upload directly to our dropbox. Deadline: May 15, 2019.

ERRATA
We apologize for the misattribution of some photographs in the Winter 2018 issue. They should be as follows: On page 14, Emma Seely, credit: Blue Heron; page 16, B-Team, credit: Tim Sutherland; page 19, Bronze Women, credit: Blue Heron; Page 30, “Team Blagen,” credit: Bernd Thierolf Fotograf; pages 30 and 32, Squad on bay horse, credit: Tom Hogye; page 13, Squad on chestnut horse, credit: Primo Ponies.

GET READY TO COMPETE!

FEATURES
8 FITNESS FOR THE VAULTING HORSE
Establish a goal for your horse, then follow through with a 3-month plan
By Carolyn Bland

12 CIRCUIT TRAINING FOR VAULTERS
There’s something for everyone in this series of exercises
By Debbie Rodriguez and Natalie Defee Mendik

16 HOW TO BE A GOOD VAULTING PARENT
Tips for new vaulting parents
By Anita Mills

22 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST: PRINCE AND KNEEL
Top ten images
Selected by Anthony Bro-Petit

DEPARTMENTS AND COLUMNS
2 Letter from the Editor
3 US Equestrian News
Tessa Divita named Vaulter of the Year
6 Judge’s Corner
Kendel Edmunds on Competition, General Impression, Rule Changes
20 In Our Own Words
Bianca Herres
24 Competition Calendar

ON OUR COVER
MALLORY BRAZZELL ON CHIMERA AT REGION IX CHAMPIONSHIPS. PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX THOMAS.
S
ince that freezing winter day when I brought my daugh-
ter to her first vaulting lesson, the sport has taken me on
quite a journey. I have been to competitions or classes
at clubs all over Region IX (where we live) and also in
California, Colorado, Oregon, Texas and Utah, as well
as in Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and Scotland. I’ve
been to trainings at local clinics, national conferences,
and completed the FEI Level-One Vaulting Coaches course. As
a lunger, I have been coached by some of the best trainers in the
United States and Europe. I ride or lunge a 17-hand Draft Cross
and an 18-hand Dutch Warmblood daily. For a person as “verti-
cally-challenged” as myself, this is an amazing development. I feel
lucky to have happened into a sport that would allow me to grow
as a horsewoman, and to build a relationship with my child that
focuses on horses.

With this issue of Equestrian Vaulting Magazine, I am step-
ing into a new role: Editor. I am not new to publishing, having
managed Carolina Wren Press, a small literary publishing house,
for 12 years, and having worked with book designers and news-
weeklies before that. I interned last year while the magazine was
being managed by E-Squared Editorial Services. I also hold a
Ph.D. in English, so that should help … in case any sentences
need diagramming!

I’m looking forward to this new challenge of providing a mag-
azine that celebrates and educates. Equestrian Vaulting Magazine,
I hope, will magnify the activities and successes of our vaulters,
coaches, lungers, and horses, and share knowledge within our
community. I hope to present a broad view of vaulting—
recreational, competitive, and adaptive—as it exists in the United
States. I will also continue to offer the regional profiles series—
the next one will be in the summer issue—the judge’s column,
and the photograph contests, along with features on fitness,
coaching, horsemanship, and competition. Appropriately, for the
first issue of 2019, the theme is Get Ready to Compete. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Andrea Selch

AVA VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Effective January 1, 2019

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS
PRESIDENT Katherine Ray
president@americanvaulting.org
EXECUTIVE VP Kelley Holly
eexecvp@americanvaulting.org
GENERAL SECRETARY Jen Williams
generalsecretary@americanvaulting.org
TREASURER Jill Hobby
treasurer@americanvaulting.org
VP COMPETITIONS Katherine Ray
president@americanvaulting.org
VP DEVELOPMENT Mikhail Proctor
vpdevelopment@americanvaulting.org
VP EDUCATION Carolyn Bland
vpeducation@americanvaulting.org
VP MEMBERSHIP Linda Bibbler
vpmembership@americanvaulting.org

DIRECTORS
COMPETITIONS DIRECTOR Emma Seely
DirectorCompetitions@americanvaulting.org
FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Robin Bowman
DirectorFundraising@americanvaulting.org
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR Kristian Roberts
DirectorIT@americanvaulting.org
JUDGES PROGRAM/TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DIRECTOR Kendel Edmunds
DirectorTechnical@americanvaulting.org
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR Gibran Stout
DirectorMarkComm@americanvaulting.org
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Andrea Selch
DirectorMembership@americanvaulting.org
SAFETY & INSURANCE DIRECTOR Dena Madden
DirectorInsuranceSafety@americanvaulting.org
VAULTING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR Makayla Clyne
DirectorDevelopment@americanvaulting.org
VOLUNTEERISM DIRECTOR Barb Brooks
DirectorVolunteerism@americanvaulting.org
EDUCATION DIRECTOR Michelle McLean
DirectorEducation@americanvaulting.org

REGIONAL SUPERVISORS
Region I Brian Winther
RSI@americanvaulting.org
Region II Sue Smith
RSII@americanvaulting.org
Region III Jayne Beebe
RSIII@americanvaulting.org
Region X Jane Egger
RSX@americanvaulting.org
Region IV Nicole Collins
RSIV@americanvaulting.org
Region V Beth Whillock
RSV@americanvaulting.org
Region IX Sarah Phelps
RSIX@americanvaulting.org

FEI VAULTING COMMITTEE
Member Suzanne Detol sdetol@aol.com

USEF VAULTING SPORT COMMITTEE
Linda Bibbler
lbibbler@gmail.com
Craig Coburn
craigcoburn@me.com

EDITORIAL BOARD
CHAIR Andrea Selch
DirectorMembership@americanvaulting.org
EDUCATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS Carolyn Bland
vpeducation@americanvaulting.org
AVA HISTORY Linda Bibbler
vpmembership@americanvaulting.org
TECHNICAL Kendel Edmunds
DirectorEducation@americanvaulting.org
AVA VISION Katherine Ray
president@americanvaulting.org

S
ince that freezing winter day when I brought my daugh-
ter to her first vaulting lesson, the sport has taken me on
quite a journey. I have been to competitions or classes
at clubs all over Region IX (where we live) and also in
California, Colorado, Oregon, Texas and Utah, as well
as in Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and Scotland. I’ve
been to trainings at local clinics, national conferences,
and completed the FEI Level-One Vaulting Coaches course. As
a lunger, I have been coached by some of the best trainers in the
United States and Europe. I ride or lunge a 17-hand Draft Cross
and an 18-hand Dutch Warmblood daily. For a person as “verti-
cally-challenged” as myself, this is an amazing development. I feel
lucky to have happened into a sport that would allow me to grow
as a horsewoman, and to build a relationship with my child that
focuses on horses.

With this issue of Equestrian Vaulting Magazine, I am step-
ingen into a new role: Editor. I am not new to publishing, having
managed Carolina Wren Press, a small literary publishing house,
for 12 years, and having worked with book designers and news-
weeklies before that. I interned last year while the magazine was
being managed by E-Squared Editorial Services. I also hold a
Ph.D. in English, so that should help … in case any sentences
need diagramming!

I’m looking forward to this new challenge of providing a mag-
azine that celebrates and educates. Equestrian Vaulting Magazine,
I hope, will magnify the activities and successes of our vaulters,
coaches, lungers, and horses, and share knowledge within our
community. I hope to present a broad view of vaulting—
recreational, competitive, and adaptive—as it exists in the United
States. I will also continue to offer the regional profiles series—
the next one will be in the summer issue—the judge’s column,
and the photograph contests, along with features on fitness,
coaching, horsemanship, and competition. Appropriately, for the
first issue of 2019, the theme is Get Ready to Compete. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Andrea Selch

AVA VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Effective January 1, 2019

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS
PRESIDENT Katherine Ray
president@americanvaulting.org
EXECUTIVE VP Kelley Holly
eexecvp@americanvaulting.org
GENERAL SECRETARY Jen Williams
generalsecretary@americanvaulting.org
TREASURER Jill Hobby
treasurer@americanvaulting.org
VP COMPETITIONS Katherine Ray
president@americanvaulting.org
VP DEVELOPMENT Mikhail Proctor
vpdevelopment@americanvaulting.org
VP EDUCATION Carolyn Bland
vpeducation@americanvaulting.org
VP MEMBERSHIP Linda Bibbler
vpmembership@americanvaulting.org

DIRECTORS
COMPETITIONS DIRECTOR Emma Seely
DirectorCompetitions@americanvaulting.org
FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Robin Bowman
DirectorFundraising@americanvaulting.org
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR Kristian Roberts
DirectorIT@americanvaulting.org
JUDGES PROGRAM/TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DIRECTOR Kendel Edmunds
DirectorTechnical@americanvaulting.org
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR Gibran Stout
DirectorMarkComm@americanvaulting.org
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Andrea Selch
DirectorMembership@americanvaulting.org
SAFETY & INSURANCE DIRECTOR Dena Madden
DirectorInsuranceSafety@americanvaulting.org
VAULTING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR Makayla Clyne
DirectorDevelopment@americanvaulting.org
VOLUNTEERISM DIRECTOR Barb Brooks
DirectorVolunteerism@americanvaulting.org
EDUCATION DIRECTOR Michelle McLean
DirectorEducation@americanvaulting.org

REGIONAL SUPERVISORS
Region I Brian Winther
RSI@americanvaulting.org
Region II Sue Smith
RSII@americanvaulting.org
Region III Jayne Beebe
RSIII@americanvaulting.org
Region X Jane Egger
RSX@americanvaulting.org
Region IV Nicole Collins
RSIV@americanvaulting.org
Region V Beth Whillock
RSV@americanvaulting.org
Region IX Sarah Phelps
RSIX@americanvaulting.org

FEI VAULTING COMMITTEE
Member Suzanne Detol sdetol@aol.com

USEF VAULTING SPORT COMMITTEE
Linda Bibbler
lbibbler@gmail.com
Craig Coburn
craigcoburn@me.com

EDITORIAL BOARD
CHAIR Andrea Selch
DirectorMembership@americanvaulting.org
EDUCATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS Carolyn Bland
vpeducation@americanvaulting.org
AVA HISTORY Linda Bibbler
vpmembership@americanvaulting.org
TECHNICAL Kendel Edmunds
DirectorEducation@americanvaulting.org
AVA VISION Katherine Ray
president@americanvaulting.org
In January, US Equestrian members gathered in West Palm Beach, Fla., for the organization’s Annual Meeting. President Murray Kessler had good news to report and paid glowing compliments to US Equestrian’s many members and volunteers.

During his General Session keynote presentation, Kessler noted that membership has jumped by 35 percent since US Equestrian implemented its ambitious Strategic Plan in 2017 and by 76 percent since 2016. Total membership is now more than 144,000. That increase has powered growth in other important areas: Revenues have risen eight percent, while the organization’s reserves are up 16 percent since the Strategic Plan’s implementation. Sponsorship also continues to expand.

Kessler described the Strategic Plan’s five-step “virtuous circle” that has led to this growth and detailed key developments and accomplishments for each step in 2018:

**STEP 1: IMPROVE CORE PROCESSES AND CAPABILITIES**
- US Equestrian’s new headquarters, scheduled to open in 2019, will save over $300,000 annually.
- Outsourcing the USEF lab to the University of Kentucky.
- Other initiatives, including creation of a Calendar-Management Task Force, competition-management training, staff training for professionalism, and new rule-change communications and deadlines.

**STEP 2: ENSURE SAFETY, FAIRNESS AND ENJOYMENT FOR MEMBERS**
- Safe Sport US Equestrian passed a rule that all adult competing members age 18 and older must have completed the three-module SafeSport training by January 1, 2019, in order to be eligible to compete at USEF-licensed events. US Equestrian also launched the “You Are Not Alone” campaign to raise awareness of the importance of Safe Sport and the training.
- A new therapeutic-use exemption status for pergolide was announced.
- The Equine Transaction Transparency Task Force was formed and activated to focus on education, transparency, and enforcement.
- USEF Lite (formerly Competition Lite) has added 80 new competitions to the calendar that were not previously licensed by USEF.

**STEP 3: PROVIDE A SUFFICIENT PATHWAY FOR ATHLETES TO WIN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION**
- Top-tier leadership for the U.S. team, which includes Isabelle Bibbier Parker, Vaulting Director of Performance.
- New sport-development initiatives are bringing growth to the sport.

**STEP 4: MARKETING SPREADS THE WORD**
- The Joy campaign continues through television, print, social media, and events across the breeds and disciplines.
- The USEF Network helped drive membership and value, streaming over 50 events, with over 1 million plays, and 300,000 hours of on-demand content viewed.
- The Learning Center released 20 new videos in 2018, with 270,000 total views and 28 videos sponsored.

**STEP 5: RESULTING IN GROWING MEMBERSHIP (as described above)**
- Watch highlights from US Equestrian’s 2019 Annual Meeting online at usef.org. Simply hover your cursor over the Network & News heading, then click USEF Network.

US Equestrian continues to reach out to the grassroots level of the sport and to alliance partners to grow this program.
- The USEF Disaster Relief Fund passed the $1 million mark in total funds raised.
US EQUESTRIAN NEWS

US EQUESTRIAN is proud to recognize Tessa Divita as the 2018 Vaulter of the Year. Divita, who competed as an individual for the United States at the FEI World Equestrian Games™ (WEG) Tryon 2018, stood out among the applicant pool based on her 2018 competition scores, personal essay, and letters of recommendation.

“I am very honored to be the recipient of this award. I remember being a little kid and watching my American vaulting heroes like my sister, Ali Divita, and Elizabeth Osborn win this award,” said Divita. “It is really meaningful to me know that I get to be among their ranks. I would like to thank my parents, Ed and Julie Divita, for always supporting me as a vaulter while still encouraging me to be a well-rounded human being.”

This past summer, Divita competed at her first World Equestrian Festival CHIO Aachen CVIO4* as an individual and as part of the U.S. Vaulting Nations Cup Team, where she ultimately finished in the top 20 in each competition. Divita competed at three of the 2018 selection trials for the WEG, placing first, second, and fifth at the Mozart Memorial Vaulting Classic and Selection Trials, Garrod’s Spring Classic, and Heart of the Rockies, respectively. Divita was the youngest U.S. vaulter to make the second round at the WEG, and she was the only vaulting WEG individual rookie to place in the top 15.

Divita comes from a family with deep vaulting roots. Her mother, Julie, and sister, Ali, competed at the FEI level, so it is no surprise that Divita started down her own vaulting path when she was five years old. Julie has been her coach for the past 15 years, even serving as her lunger at the Alltech FEI WEG 2014. Divita has drawn upon her mother’s guidance to find her own success at the FEI level. She competed in her first CVI3* as an individual in 2016, and since that time, Divita has earned top-three placings in five out of the past six competitions.

Divita is a member of the Portola Valley Vaulters and is currently a sophomore at the University of California, Berkeley, studying Molecular and Cellular Biology.

Stay up to date on U.S. Vaulting by following USA Vaulting on Facebook and US Equestrian on Instagram and Twitter. Use #USAVaulting.
TESSA DIVITA

US Equestrian VAULTER of the Year
Competition is defined as the act of competing: a rivalry for supremacy, a prize, honor or advantage. In my experience as a judge and a top-level competitor, I find that each of us is motivated by a different aspect of this definition.

There are traits that all champions possess and to master those is your goal. Whether you are motivated by the blue ribbon, or exceeding a previous high score, or besting a particularly talented rival, there are many things you can do to hone your competitive skills.

**THE MENTAL EDGE**

Some competitors live for the moments they have in front of the judges and audience. On the flip side, I have seen many top-notch competitors whose biggest challenge is keeping it all together in the competition arena. If this is you, to overcome this, you can try visualizing the perfect performance, staying in the present (for instance, after a mistake, don't dwell on or become distracted but bounce back quickly), or having competition goals that are not solely based on the placing outcome but on other achievable and quantitative.
things (such as achieving at least a 7.0 in all compulsory exercises or receiving a performance score a full point higher than in the last competition). Fortunately for today’s athletes, there are endless sources of information available on how to improve this aspect of competition. Try some and see what works best for you.

THE PHYSICAL EDGE
There is no easy formula for success, but nothing prepares you better for the competition arena than practice and hard work. The sport of vaulting requires a very high level of fitness for you to compete at your best. Practice time on the horse is limited, so make the most of every practice: Be prepared when you arrive and have a plan and goal for each practice. Coaches spend a huge amount of time and energy saying things such as “point your toes,” “straighten your legs,” and “control your landings;” but these instructions, once you start competing, should be a given. Spend your practice time mastering new skills and learning how you can cross-train better for your level. If you have a setback, you need to be able to bounce back quickly, both physically and emotionally.

THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT
This aspect is a little harder to define, but those who have a competitive spirit, or the heart of a champion, are enthusiastic about and seek a competitive atmosphere in whatever they do. It is a core belief for individuals who want it all and are willing to do the work to achieve it. Champions start with a dream, and then map out what it will take (the work, practice, time, money, and energy) to achieve that dream. Then, they go out and make it happen. If you are part of a team, it is your responsibility to uphold your end of this bargain and challenge your teammates if they are not doing their share.

As a judge and a clinician, I have seen many talented competitors who never achieve their true potential because they lack focus or desire, or they do not have adequate coaching and quality horse time. Horses and coaches can be found, so it really comes down to how badly you want it. The answer is the piece that defines you as a competitor and no one else can give this to you. It really is true that “where there is a will, there is a way!”

If you have questions regarding any of the information in this piece you can send them to thejudgescorner@gmail.com.

TROT/COPPER LEAPS CLARIFICATION
The 2019 Rulebook has an important change to the wording of Articles 217 and 220, Copper and Trot Freestyle. For the past few years, Trot and Copper competitors have been pushing the envelope on the allowed hop—from knees to feet—in Freestyle. We have seen hop to side stand and hop from forward-facing stand to side or reverse stand. The feeling of the Technical Committee and the Board who approved the new wording was that our intention is to encourage safe and well-executed routines at these lower levels. For this reason, we are being more specific about which hop is allowed.

THE NEW VERBIAGE IS AS FOLLOWS:
Vaulter must stay in contact with the horse. Ground jumps and leaps above the horse are NOT allowed and will receive a deduction if performed; hop from forward-facing kneel to forward-facing feet is allowed.
Each and every horse has basic fitness requirements to stay healthy physically and mentally, but there are different fitness goals depending on training and competition demands. The steady trot horse does not need the same fitness level as a senior squad horse competing at the international level. Some horses also might need a more specialized fitness requirement depending on their body type, breed, and the workload that is required. For instance, draft horses, because they were bred for strength rather than speed, need to be very fit to carry vaulters at the canter. By considering breed, age, time of year, workload, and competition/training goals, we can keep our horses supple and promote their longevity and soundness.
There are four basic categories of fitness to be considered.

- Cardio: Heart and muscle health
- Respiratory: Breathing
- Strength: Muscle, power, and endurance
- Suppleness: Range of motion of joints

Your first task is to assess the horse's current fitness level and determine the training workload. Familiarize yourself with the common signs of an unfit horse, as these can critically affect the horse's health and willingness to work.

- An unwillingness or inability to increase speed or change gait: Ignoring or slipping behind the aids
- Deteriorating quality of pace: Some horses, as they become tired, will lose the ability to balance and start to rush around the circle
- Loss of motivation: Ears back or tail wringing
- Reduced coordination: Stumbling, losing balance, wandering
- Excessive sweat (Note that this can also be a sign of stress.)
- Increased head shaking or neck movement
- Increased breathing effort
- Inability to recover quickly from sweating or breathing hard

The bottom line is that you need to know your horse. Use your initiative to give the horse periods of rest when you see signs of fatigue. Take the opportunity to send the vaulters back to the barrel. My personal philosophy is to be “Short and Sweet. I believe that horses only have so many circles in a lifetime, so my goal is to not use those up unnecessarily. If the horse is going great, let your horse stop before it becomes uncomfortable and tiring.

Establish a goal for the horse: Perhaps you want your horse to be able to canter for a certain number of minutes with or without vaulters. My guideline for a team horse is that the horse should be able to canter 6–7 minutes with good quality and without signs of fatigue or stress. A trot horse might need to trot for 8–10 minutes, or in several 5-minute sessions.

Now that you have your assessment and goals, it is time to come up with a good 3-month plan. Three months is the usual guideline for regaining full fitness in a horse, although this does depend on where you start. Most competition horses nowadays are in some work year ’round, but if you are starting from scratch, or if you have weather issues that prevent winter training, then your plan will likely take 3 months.

Walking to build fitness should not be underrated. With 20 minutes of brisk walking, alternating between long rein and being on the bit, and including some lateral work, you can start to build or maintain a level of suppleness, strength, and cardio. The walk is yoga for horses. I often see the walk being used as a rest period, instead of using the walk to really concentrate on responsiveness to aids, being in front of the leg, changing from long rein to a collected walk. Don’t waste the walk—it has so many advantages to prepare the horse physically and mentally for the other gaits.

Trotting can be introduced after a few days of walking, but keep it light at first. While the muscular and cardiovascular systems of a horse can respond rapidly to increased exercise demands, the supporting structures (the bones, ligaments, cartilage, tendons, and hooves) adapt much more slowly. There is a system to introducing trot and canter: Once a horse is super happy with the walk regimen (that is, it gets easier and easier), I weave in trot and small bursts of canter. I assess the progress carefully to ensure that the horse is not overly stressed and has the desired response.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA SELCH
RECOMMENDED FITNESS PLAN FOR AN UNFIT HORSE

WEEK 1–2: Use 20 minutes of brisk walking. Endeavor to use this 20 minutes of walk in all your sessions and you will find the horse will start to work with a much better attitude, relaxed muscles, and warm lungs and heart.

WEEK 3–4: Depending on previous fitness level and your assessment in the 2nd or 3rd week, introduce the trot. Trot lightly for 2 minutes, then walk to recover for 3 minutes. Repeat twice on both reins. Next, introduce the canter for 1 minute, then walk to recover for 3 minutes. Repeat twice on both reins. This comprises about a 30- to 36-minute workout. Be accurate: Use the timer on your smart phone. I set mine every time when working on fitness, because I want to see how the horse is progressing.

MONTH 2: Extend the above workout to about 45 minutes, increasing the trot and canter and decreasing the rest period between. If you are trying to incorporate vaulters during the development of fitness, only allow them to vault in the period before the horse shows signs of fatigue. The added weight-bearing and balancing required to carry a vaulter will take a toll on an unfit horse.

MONTH 3: Continue as above, increasing lengths of trot and canter.

My goal is to have my horses start the completion season healthy, happy and sound, with the fitness they each will require to get the job done. However, bear in mind that, at the first competition of the season, horses often respond with excitement in the warm-ups, which can mean extra work to bring them to a good round. For this reason, it is important to come home and allow recovery with some light work directly after competitions and traveling. Again, send your vaulters to the barrels!

The fitness plan doesn’t end after the first competition, but continues through the very end of the season, adjusting where needed. Using a variety of training methods and the Long Slow Distance (LSD) method, you will develop a well-rounded horse both physically and mentally.

Carolyn Bland, FEI Gold and Bronze medalist, utilizes her extensive equestrian background to train top vaulting horses in the United States. She is head coach and lunger at Pacific Coast Vaulting Club.
Within your plan, as your horse gets fitter, you should try to include all these fitness-training tools and then continue to use these tools for cross-training.

**IN THE ARENA**
- Lunging in a controlled manner, not “getting the bucks out”
- Long Lining
- Flat work using the Training Scale with frequent changes of gaits and lengthening or shortening within the gaits
- Cavaletti work
- Gymnastic Jumping
- Loose Jumping (Keep this one for later in your program.)

**OUTSIDE THE ARENA**
- Road work on harder surfaces
- Hill work: Uphill develops strength, downhill develops carrying muscles
- Trail riding on varying surfaces and at all gaits
- Cross-country jumping
- Gallops or increased bursts of energy to increase cardio response
team circuit

WARM-UP

BY DEBBIE RODRIGUEZ & NATALIE DEFEE MENDIK

WHO DOESN’T LOVE PROPS? Get everyone in your club involved with this fun, multi-level, circuit-style warm-up designed to accommodate all ages and fitness levels.

You will need a mini-trampoline, one or more resistance bands, two balance boards or Bosu® balls, and two yoga balls. Set up your props so everyone can rotate through each exercise, spending one minute at each station, and going through three rotations.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Start as a group with one minute of jumping jacks to get the heart pumping and blood flowing.
STATION ONE: MINI-TRAMPOLINE

The high-knee run is a cardio go-to move that also challenges core stability. Keep it simple with a low stride and small arm swing. To increase the difficulty of this exercise, use a high knee stride and 90° arm swing. Hand weights also kick the difficulty up a notch.

STATION TWO: BALANCE BOARD

Squats on the balance board tone lower extremities while increasing balance and hip strength. Those who aren’t able to perform squats on the balance board should practice simply standing on the board for 45 seconds. Engaging your core and keeping your eyes up help with balance.

STATION THREE: BALANCE BOARD

Push-ups on the balance board tone the shoulders and core. Keep your belly button to your spine, open your shoulders, and control your head and neck. Those who are not ready for push-ups can hold the plank position while balancing on the board.
FROM TINY TOTS TO TWEENS TO COACHES, everyone can join the warm-up fun! For all exercises, the range of motion should be appropriate for each person’s skill and fitness level with an eye toward form and control. Any participants who are unstable should have a spotter.

Debbie Rodriguez, creator of the four-part “Success in the Saddle” equestrian total fitness series, is a Grand Prix dressage rider, FEI 3* Dressage Judge, USDF Gold Medalist, USEF ‘R’ Eventing Judge, and International Sports Sciences Association certified personal fitness coach. See “Success in the Saddle” online at www.successinthesaddle.com.

Natalie DeFee Mendik is an award-winning journalist specializing in equine media. Caitlyn Mendik is a Silver vaulter with Velocity Vaulters.

Special thanks to Samantha Bundy and Kylee Smith of Western Sky Vaulters, Hallie Dudley of The Dudleys, and Juliet Mendik of Velocity Vaulters.

**STATION FOUR: YOGA BALL**

Ball exchanges promote balance and control while strengthening the abs. Start by lying on your back and holding the ball between your calves. Raise the ball with your legs while reaching up with your hands, engaging your core. Grip the ball with your hands, returning to your back. Repeat, moving the ball from hands to calves.
STATION FIVE: YOGA BALL
Leg curls develop hip strength and core stability. In a reverse plank position, rest your feet on the ball. Roll the ball toward you with your feet, engaging your core. This exercise is about correct form and control, not speed. Keep your hips up.

STATION SIX: RESISTANCE BAND
A three-way stretch exercise allows you to catch your breath while improving posture and strengthening the small muscles that stabilize the shoulders. Holding the band in front of you, open your arms diagonally, stretching the band. Repeat on the opposite diagonal, and then finish opening both arms parallel to the ground. Repeat the full circuit two more times.
PHOTOS BY TODD TINKHAM
How to be a Good Vaulting Parent

Parents help make winners of everyone in the vaulting club

BY ANITA MILLS

If you and your child are receiving this magazine, you are now officially a “vaulting parent.” Hold on, because you are going on a wonderful ride with your child. Paying club fees and transporting kids to practice are just the first of your necessary personal investments in this sport. Here are some tips to help you realize the very best of this experience.

BASIC PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Make sure that your vaulter is sufficiently physically fit for the sport. Depending on your club’s equine resources, classes may occur only once a week and the actual time your vaulter gets to be on the horse is limited by how many horses are available and the number of vaulters in the lesson. Cross-training in other disciplines helps prepare for those precious minutes of horse time, and adds exponentially to a vaulter’s strength and ability to perform difficult exercises on a moving horse. Encourage your vaulter to choose weekly lessons in one or more related disciplines: riding, gymnastics, dance, yoga, etc.

Keep tabs on your child’s mindset. All kids go through similar stages of emotional, mental, and physical development. Be sure that your child is in the vaulting program because she or he really wants to be, and not for any other reason. Frequent check-ins with your vaulter are important to maintain a positive attitude and for your vaulter feel supported in the pursuit of vaulting.

Keep a direct and open line of communication with the coach about your child’s physical health and preparedness, as well as your child’s emotional/mental outlook. Your help with this aspect can be a great help to the coach, who is trying to find the best ways to help inspire your vaulter. Keep the lines of communication open for yourself as well: If you have a suggestion or concern, talk with the coach outside of class time.
BE THERE ON TIME AND STAY UNTIL THE HORSE CARE IS DONE

Vaulting is, above all, a horse sport, so horse care, before and after class, is a necessary part of the experience. Know your team’s schedules for practice and animal care. Your coach has set a schedule for each session that depends upon each vaulter being on time, and working as a group to prepare the horses as warm up together.

Make sure your vaulter participates fully in horse and tack care. Build this extra time into your family calendar. With younger vaulters, this may require some parental help and supervision. You say you’ve never groomed or tacked up a vaulting horse before? Don’t worry, it’s not that hard!

THE TEAM ALREADY HAS A COACH

Please refrain from trying to coach your own, or another’s children, from the sidelines. That’s the coach’s job. However, there are many ways you can help during class: You might be invited to lead warm-ups for the vaulters,
or to hold horses on the edge of the ring. Many parents learn to be lungers. Just ask what you can do to help.

Coaching your vaulter a bit at home is another matter: You will need to supervise your very young vaulter on the practice barrel to insure your child’s safety on the apparatus. You may need to help your youngster remember the order of exercises in the compulsories, or the moves to his or her freestyle routine when practicing at home. To do this means you need to be present during class, paying close enough attention to learn the basic moves and vocabulary of the sport. Put your phone on Do Not Disturb!

CHEERFUL AND COORDINATED VOLUNTEERS
ARE THE MAGIC GLUE THAT HOLDS A TEAM TOGETHER

Depending on the size or your club and the number of horses that need exercise between vaulting classes, your vaulter (or you!) may be needed to hand walk or ride the horses at other times during the week. This responsibility often falls to the older vaulters in the club, and/or to the experienced riders among the parents. Remember, if the coach makes a request of vaulters and parents for horse care and exercise, it’s something you can do that would otherwise have to be hired out. Many clubs are able to keep monthly fees more reasonable with this kind of regular volunteer help.

Even if you don’t feel comfortable or experienced enough to work with the horses, there is always something for which you can volunteer. If you are good at organizing transportation, accommodations, food, working with digital music files, keeping records, sewing costumes, bedazzling, or styling hair, step on up!

At most competitions, you’ll also be asked to give several volunteer hours to the event. There are a variety of jobs that need to be done in the course of a competition weekend, from scooping poop in the arena to preparing ribbons for presentation. Competition organizers need help with set-up and take-down of the arena, scribes for judges, runners for scores, data-entry clerks, music coordinators, sound technicians and announcers, as well as ring stewards and ushers for the stands. Consider what jobs you might enjoy doing, and sign up!

BE THE LIGHT AND ENJOY THE REWARDS

Did I say cheerful? Try to invest in the care and success of all team members, not just that of your own child. Every adult needs to focus on safe, successful practice sessions and competitions for the whole club. We need to leave our own bad hair days or our difficult grown-up day jobs out of the mix. “Barn Time” is good for parents too—let go of work and enjoy the camaraderie of the other parents and the affinities of these shared experiences with them.

A positive and encouraging attitude toward all team members—vaulters, coaches, lungers, grooms, and other parents—is especially necessary in the competition setting where performance nervousness is a real issue for everyone. After all, these kids have worked and practiced for hours, and have the courage to compete on a moving horse! The coaches and lungers need support as well—they put in hundreds of hours and are out there because they love the sport and want to help your child succeed—with utmost safety.

Please don’t forget that participation in this sport should ultimately be experienced as a fun activity...otherwise, why would vaulting families want to challenge themselves in such extreme ways? Stick with it and you will reap the rewards of close friendships in your own club, regionally, nationally, and even internationally. Everyone wins!

See you at the barn!

Anita Mills is the mother of Region IX vaulter Helen Mills-Selch. Among Anita’s many skills are scribing for judges, announcing, uploading music for competition, flyer design, meal ordering and delivery, and sewing elastic on vaulting shoes.

Special thanks to our models, Prince and Manitoba and the families of Triangle Equestrian Vaulting.
Athletics and Body Image

Remaining Confident in a Spandex-Ridden Sport

BY BIANCA HERRES
When I went to my first vaulting competition, I realized that the nature of this sport was an inclusive one, with passion overriding anything else—including size. I was struck by the fact that no two vaulters, coaches, lungers, or even horses were exactly the same.

However, as I grew up in this sport, there were some growing pains, which were not kindly tended to by our particular infatuation with prancing around in spandex. I began to see an undeniable link between how I felt about my vaulting and how I felt about my body. The skills needed to become a successful vaulter are no joke; but there is a fine line between wanting to be as good as our idols, and falling into the trap of comparing ourselves to them.

So what’s to be done about trying to feel good as we are, while also trying to improve ourselves?

**REALIZE THAT OUR BODIES ARE THERE FOR US—ALWAYS**

Vaulters in general are an extremely passionate breed of people. We care so much about our sport and improving our athleticism that it can be difficult not to associate our current skill level with our physical bodies. It is important to realize that no matter what happens in a competition, a practice, or even throughout a season, our bodies are always working with us, not against us.

Think about it. How many coaches, teams, horses, competitions, and uniforms do we encounter throughout a vaulting career? Our sport is in constant flux, and yet no matter how many different situations we come across, the one constant is that we have always had ourselves. No matter the obstacle—injury, recovery, bad rounds, and good rounds alike—our bodies are the #1 supporters of our vaulting careers.

**WE NEED TO WORK WITH OUR BODIES, NOT AGAINST THEM**

What makes vaulting so special is how very individualized it is. No two free-styles are exactly the same in personality or technique—so why should any two bodies executing them be the same? Even if we all trained exactly the same way, we still would not experience the same results. Everybody, and every Body, is different, and this should be reflected in how we train. This is where we can really hone and cultivate our craft.

The result of coming to understand our bodies and syncing up how each of us needs to train for the success we crave is powerful and (in informal terms) wicked cool. Running into the ring knowing that our bodies have learned how to be there for us allows for an entirely new kind of trust in ourselves. It builds an appreciation for our bodies because of their individuality, and that is incredibly special.

**KNOW THAT ATHLETICS ARE NOT DEFINED BY AESTHETICS**

The way we appear says nothing (nothing) about who we are as vaulters, or as people. Our characters may come from our relationships with our horses and teams, from sportsmanship, or any combination of these. You can look all kinds of different ways in all kinds of different uniforms, but still nothing can change these attributes.

Every member of the vaulting community knows how many incredible people we get to be surrounded by. Few other equestrian sports, or sports in general, encourage the kind of mutual support that is ingrained in the culture of vaulting. We cheer on other teams, borrow one another’s horses, and make friendships that extend far beyond the barn. None of these things are cultivated by how we look, but entirely by who we are.

**AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE**

The fact of the matter is that, yes, it’s hard not to compare ourselves to others as athletes. Everyone is fighting to be strong, flexible, and harmonious—and we’re all doing it in a whole lot of spandex. But really, at the end of the day, the relationship we have with our bodies as vaulters is something irreplaceable.

The next time you finish a round at practice or a competition, take a deep breath and remind yourself that you really are out there doing gymnastics on horses. Thanking our bodies for supporting a pretty crazy sport is the first step toward getting a little more comfortable with whatever space you may occupy.

Athletics builds friendships, and that includes the one with yourself.
CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Prince and Kneel

Photograph Contest

TOP TEN

Final Judge: Anthony Bro-Petit of Anthony Bro Films; past member of Team Noroc (2016)

The winner will receive a special bag of AVA swag!

Our next photo contest subject will be Arabesques. See page 1 for details.

SECOND PLACE
LAEVC on Charles
BY DEVON MAITOZO

THIRD PLACE
LAEVC on Charles
BY BLAKE DAHLGREN

Krista Brooks on Wy
BY LESLIE TAYLOR

Augusta Rose Lewis and Emma Milito on Mateo
BY TIM SUTHERLAND

Sidney Schimack on Sully
BY TIM SUTHERLAND

Moira Hampton on Xena
BY TIM SUTHERLAND

Allegra Hart on Manitoba
BY TODD TINKHAM
FIRST PLACE
Alex Schaubhut on Samson
BY KIMBERLY WELLMAN

Juliet Mendik on Amadeus
BY SHERYL VERBITSKI

Aurora Veldhuis and Renaz Hussein on Diesel
BY MICHAEL SCHANNER
## COMPETITION CALENDAR

### APRIL 13–14
**FALCONWOOD VAULTERS SPRING FEST**
Covington, GA • AVA
Contact: Lisa Zielenske
lmzienks@yahoo.com

### APRIL 20–21
**MOZART MEMORIAL**
Sherwood OR
AVA / USEF / Junior Worlds Selection Trial
Contact: Patty Littmann
bronxzoo222@aol.com

### APRIL 25–28
**PACIFIC CUP CVI**
Murieta, CA • USEF / FEI
Contact: Linda Bibbler
lbibbler@gmail.com

### MAY 11
**NORTH VALLEY SPRING FEST**
Woodland, CA • AVA
Contact: Megan Grove
equestriansinharmony@gmail.com

### MAY 11–12
**REGION IV MAYFEST**
Eaton, CO • AVA
Contact: Nicole Collins
equichance@gmail.com

### MAY 18
**KEYSTONE SPRING FEST**
Bloomsburg, PA • AVA
Contact: Sandra Snyder
jossan3@verizon.net

### MAY 18–19
**BLUEGRASS VAULTING FEST**
Paris, KY • AVA
Contact: Mikhail Proctor
fleurdelisvaulters@gmail.com

### MAY 22–26*
**HEART OF THE ROCKIES AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN CUP CVI**
Albuquerque, NM • AVA / USEF / FEI
Contact: Robin Bowman
rockymtnocupcv@outlook.com

### JUNE 8–9
**MEADOW LAKE VAULTING FEST**
Lancaster, KY • AVA
Contact: Lindsey Howard
manager@meadowlakeec.com

### JUNE 11–12
**LEGACY VAULTING FEST**
Grand Rapids, MI • AVA
Contact: Karin Schmidt
legacystableskarin@gmail.com

### JUNE 15
**TAMBOURINE FEST**
Petaluma, CA • AVA
Contact: Kelley Holly
tambourine-farm@att.net

### JUNE 20–30
**REGION IX CHAMPIONSHIPS**
Lexington, VA • AVA / USEF
Contact: Sarah Phelps
sphelps301@yahoo.com

### JUNE 30–JULY 1
**REGION III CHAMPIONSHIPS**
Moses Lake, WA • AVA / USEF
Contact: Lori Robison
lori@fourwindsrsc.com

### AUGUST 8–11
**USEF/AVA NATIONAL VAULTING CHAMPIONSHIPS**
St. Louis, MO • AVA / USEF
Contact: Kathy Ray
president@americanvaulting.org

For more information, visit www.americanvaulting.org/calendar
- Resident/Day, 1-8 weeks
- Ages 8-16, Co-ed
- Mini-Me for younger ages
- Vaulting twice a day/all levels
- Vaulting Team
- 7 Vaulting Horses
- Diverse general camp programs
- 150 acres w/ private lake
- 5 rings w/ indoor arena
- Hunt Seat Jumping program

www.cedarlodge.com
campcedarlodge@gmail.com
(269) 674-8072
PO Box 218, Lawrence, MI 49064

Cedar Lodge Summer Camp

Equestrian Vaulting Unitards since 1948

ERVY SPORTS FASHION, LLC
Birmingham, MI 48009
Phone: (1)586 530 9800
sales@ervy.de

Always with the latest fashion & trends

Equestrian Vaulting Unitards • www.ervy.de • Equestrian Vaulting Unitards

Follow us on facebook to be always up to date!
facebook.com/ERVYSportsFashion
“Good footing is safe footing!”

Call Cynthia Brewster-Keating
864-804-0011 for all your arena needs!

www.ggt-footing.com