



The 2023 USPC Convention Board of Governors meeting was held at the Marriott, St. Louis Grand, St. Louis, MO

## **Upcoming National Events**

2023 USPC Championships Central - National Equestrian Center Lake St. Louis, MO. Dressage, Mounted Games, Show Jumping, Tetrathlon, Western Dressage, and Open Gymkhana and Trail Competitions will be held June 5-8. Eventing and Quiz Competitions will be held June 9-11.

2023 USPC Championships East - Tryon International Equestrian Center, Mill Creek, NC, July 26-30 for Dressage, Eventing, Mounted Games, Polocrosse, Quiz, Show Jumping, Tetrathlon, Western Dressage, and Open Gymkhana and Trail Competitions.

2024 USPC Convention - Peppermill Reno Resort, January 24-28 in Reno, NV.

Festival 2024 - Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, KY, from July 15-22.

## **General Comments**

*Comments from President Jennifer Sweet*

In November USPC hosted the first in-person exchange since the pandemic with four riders from USPC, four riders from The Pony Club (Great Britain), and four riders from the Irish Pony Club. Thank you to the following volunteers and Hunts - Whiskey Road and Syd Wilson; Belle Meade and Epp and Linda Wilson; Moore County Hounds and Cameron Sadler, MFH, and a current Pony Club member. The participants had a fun, memorable, and successful exchange.

In November, President Sweet was interviewed by Sally Batton of Athletic Equestrian on her podcast which President Sweet shared the history of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc. and what USPC is like today. In addition, she answered questions about adult members, certifications, championships, Riding Centers, and much more.

*Comments from Executive Director Teresa Woods*

## **Operational Updates**

Alyssa Sands, the Systems Administrator, has ensured that employees are equipped with the hardware and technology they need to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. In 2023, two new desktop computers, a laptop computer, and monitors will be purchased. In addition, the main server will be replaced, which the Board approved at the October Board meeting for a 2023 capital purchase.



The Activities Department in collaboration with the Systems Administrator increased the inventory of event equipment which through long-term planning USPC will be able to become more cost-effective by using its equipment to offset rental costs.

As of February 1, 2023, Building #2 is at 100% occupancy. The American Morgan Horse Association has leased additional space to accommodate its expanding staff and storage needs.

### Key Areas/Strategic Initiatives Updates

The focus of 2022 and continuing into 2023 is the implementation of the Strategic Plan which continues to focus on simplifying operations to remove complexity, improve volunteer leadership training and access to resources, deliver a positive volunteer experience, and improve the member experience and engagement. Outcome indicators will be developed to capture the scope of work across USPC, providing an important baseline to measure improvements resulting from key actions currently underway.

In 2022, President Sweet appointed the Local Structure Ad-Hoc Committee which is reviewing USPC's local club structure and whether all clubs can operate using the same governance and operation structure that is currently in place. The committee will bring forward a recommendation to the Board at the May Board of Governors meeting.

The mobile-optimized website is currently being developed by our website developer, United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), with an expected launch date in early 2024.

Instruction and National Testing staff, along with key volunteers are evaluating areas to improve including consistency across the certifications, updating the Standards of Proficiencies (SOPs), and eliminating duplication in instruction and testing materials.

The Development staff and volunteers are expanding the USPC funding base to support programs and services while exploring new and innovative ways to support the USPC Annual Fund. In 2022 the year ended with a successful Regional Challenge Campaign, which surpassed the Annual Fund goal by \$29,386 (before Regional Challenge distributions)!

Regional Administration continues to invest efforts to increase educational opportunities and support for volunteer leadership. Revised leader education modules will be offered in person and online in 2023.

The Strategic Plan goals and objectives speak a lot to a member's experience with the expected outcome being the reversal of membership decline trends. There will be a need for additional discussions and strategies for increasing membership engagement and retention as there has been a 4.7% drop in membership in 2022. Retention of membership must remain at the forefront of our strategies and actions.

USPC is also experiencing a decrease in the number of members eligible for national-level certifications, which is also affecting lower-certified members pursuing national activities and events (i.e., Championships,

Exchanges) which are dependent on age and certification level. Additional strategies will need to be discussed and implemented.

### **Report from the Treasurer/Finance Committee**

USPC is below budget in operating revenue and below budget in operating expenses. The investment losses for the two operating accounts (Insurance and Deferred Operating) of \$281,255 year-to-date are included in the Net Operating Revenue. Without them, USPC would be at a positive \$90,454 Net Operating Revenue versus a budget of \$2,525 resulting in a Net Gain of \$187,929 year-to-date budget.

USPC's cash balances remain strong. Investment activity had a loss of \$110,946 in December.

Credit card fees have increased dramatically. The Finance Department will analyze and speak to the bank to see if they will lower the fees.

National Testing revenue is far below budget with examiner expenses being kept down as much as possible, but it did not cover the drop in revenue.

Activities: The International Foxhunting Exchange expenses have been reconciled, with some tough decisions that were made, funding was sufficient.

Shop Pony Club met its sales goals for the year, the cost of sales went slightly above budget by 56.3%, with expenses well controlled.

The Development Department exceeded all its revenue goals and controlled expenses.

USPC received an award from the Team Kentucky Non-Profit Assistance Fund of \$100,000, which is a one-time unrestricted award from the state program.

### **Report of VP of Instruction**

The C+, H, and H-M certification titles will no longer be assigned to a member. The option will still be there for members to take the riding portion of the C-3 before earning their H-B, but they will remain a C-2 in the database until they earn their H-B which is the corresponding horse management certification. For the H and H-HM, the same thing is true, the member will have to earn their H-A certification since there are no riding requirements attached to the H-A test. The same will apply to the A certification when a member passes their riding portion of A, they will be a B until they pass the H-A.

The D-1 Standards of Proficiency (SOP) have a fresh look which was a Task Force recommendation. Does Not Meet Standards (DNMS) has been removed from the D-1 test sheet as it is a “no fail” test. The D-2 and D-3

SOPs are in development and will have a similar format as the new D-1 and will be combined into one document as well as the C-1 and C-2 SOPs.

Western Dressage Standards of Proficiency are being developed for the D-A level.

The H-B and H-A SOPs along with all riding levels will be reviewed in 2023 by the Standards and Testing Committee D-A and the National Testing Curricula Committee.

There are requests for Visiting Instructors from clubs, now we need members to apply to become Visiting Instructors. For more information about becoming a Visiting Instructor click [here](#).

## **Report of VP of Activities**

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The Activities Department is in negotiations with the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, VA, for the 2025 USPC Championships East. The department is currently investigating potential dates and locations for the 2025 Championships West in the Northwest part of the U.S.

### Rulebook Updates

All rulebooks have been updated with the revised USPC Veterinary Care and Equine Medications policy, which removes the requirement of competitors to have a veterinary note for medications. In addition, the Yellow (Warning) Card process changed to allow any rally official to give a Yellow Card, with penalty points to be reviewed by the ground jury to make the final determination for penalty points.

Dressage – Alternative eligibility path added.

Eventing – The United States Eventing Association (USEA) Modified competition level was added to the rulebook and the Preliminary level was removed.

Mounted Games – Alternative eligibility path added; Minimum number of games for Championship eligibility changed to six; The option of stable managers added and allowing for a spare mount.

Quiz – Alternative eligibility path added; Team configuration; Scoring changes for simplification of rallies.

Show Jumping – More closely aligns with USEF Show Jumping rulebook; The reduction of the number of refusals before elimination from three to two to align with the USEF rules.

Trail – Name change from Western Trail to Trail.

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## **Report of the VP of Regional Administration**

Regional Administration continues to educate and facilitate new leaders in their positions as well as provide advice and guidance to returning leaders such as:

- New leaders receive directions to join their respective communication platforms via Google Groups.
- Leader Education modules are being revised so they can be offered both in-person and online in 2023.
- The mini-messages continue to provide education as well as content for the leader resource pages of the website.

During the USPC Convention in St. Louis, MO, a Professional Development seminar was presented by Jay McChord to USPC Leadership. The seminar addressed generational leadership and finding opportunities in external change, among many other topics on leader mindset and communication.

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## **National Youth Board (NYB) Report**

The NYB is currently working on the “What is Pony Club?” project. The goal of the project is for USPC members to be able to uniformly communicate and explain “What is Pony Club” while capturing the heart and soul of Pony Club.

### NYB Committee Updates

Member Affairs & Networking Committee – The committee with the help of the National Office hopes to launch the Student Incentive Program, as it is not fully complete yet. Budgeting concerns have been cropping up, but the goal is to launch it this year after the USPC Convention.

Service Committee - The committee worked in conjunction with the Annual Fund’s Regional Challenge to encourage their clubs and regions to give, as well as contribute themselves. Ideas for a project were discussed for the 2023 Convention’s service project. The committee sent out communication before the USPC Convention in St. Louis, MO, but did not receive any responses, the committee will continue to research future service projects.

Regional Youth Board (RYB) Committee – The committee is working on a brochure and guidelines for regions and club officials that are interested in starting a youth board of their own.

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## **Pony Club International Alliance Report (PCIA) Report**

Virtual Exchanges have become popular with participation from outside of the PCIA increasing with participation. Expanding membership is under discussion as many of the countries operate under The Pony Club, United Kingdom (PCUK). Membership countries do come first if the exchange wishes to expand. Virtual Exchanges will continue in 2023 though setting dates are a challenge when working with two hemispheres.

The 2023 Virtual Dressage exchange will be hosted by USPC along with the Hong Kong Pony Club. The judging will occur the last week of May and the final results in by June 11. USPC members are being encouraged to participate especially in the pairs class and Prix Caprilli. The 2023 United States Dressage Federation (USDF) test will be used for all tests but the Prix Caprilli, which the New Zealand Pony Club will offer their test for that class.

The Virtual 2023 Show Jumping Exchange will be hosted by Pony Club Australia. For more information about virtual exchanges, please click [here](#).

The 2023 Inter-Pacific Exchange was hosted by the New Zealand Pony Club on January 9-16, 2023, with USPC winning the Nation's Cup.

The 2023 International Mounted Games Exchange will be in-person and hosted by Pony Club Australia on November 8-19. Applications are open now and will close on April 1, 2023. Please note that each participant must meet the following requirements:

- *Be a C-2 flat certified Pony Club member in good standing.*
- *Have competed in a regional Games Rally in the previous year.*
- *Be 13 to 15 years of age as of January 1, 2023.*
- *Be selected by their regional supervisor.*
- *Have strong Horse Management skills.*
- *Have a strong record of service to Pony Club.*
- *Have Strong Ambassador Qualities.*
- *Have a strong background in riding a variety of horses.*
- *Have recommendations of your, DC/CA, RS, AND one other Pony Club official (RIC, HMO, NE, BOG, Committee member, etc.)*
- *Assist with fundraising (please read the fundraising document)*
- *If necessary, be able to meet before the official start of the Exchange to begin work as a team (location to be determined).*
- *Sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct.*
- *Complete all application requirements.*

If you would like to apply for the International Mounted Games Exchange please click [here](#).

## **Board Committee Highlights**

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**Safety:** The committee is working on updates for the Safety Handbook.

**Marketing & Communications:** USPC is applying for the American Horse Publications Equine Industry Vision Award. There will be four finalists, and if USPC does not receive the award, but does become a finalist, then we would be in the running again. However, if we're not a winner and not a finalist, we can apply next year.



The website redesign will continue in 2023 with Alyssa Sands, Systems Administrator, and Sarah Conrad, Marketing & Communications Director working with USEF, who serves as our website development team, to fine-tune the content, style, and design.

**Development:** The 2022 Annual Fund surpassed its goal by \$29,386 (before Regional Challenge distributions) thanks to Pony Club’s generous friends and family, volunteers, members, sponsors, and donors. Donations from clubs, centers, and regions represented \$23,263.51 of giving to the Annual Fund, which is an increase of 8% over 2021.

The inaugural Regional Challenge kicked off on September 1 and ran through November 30. The goal for the Regional Challenge was three-fold:

1. To increase awareness and understanding of the importance of the USPC Annual Fund at the grassroots level;
2. To assist club and region leaders who must address the USPC Annual Fund at their year-end meetings and to increase giving from clubs, centers, and regions;
3. And to support all Pony Club regions through a revenue-share program by giving back a portion of what each region raises.

A total of \$44,863.35 was raised with \$4,276 available to regions through the revenue share. Many regions elected to donate their share back to USPC. A total of \$2,299 in revenue share were distributed to regions. The winner of the 2022 Regional Challenge was the Old Dominion Region which will be presented with a check during the Meeting of the Corporation at the USPC Convention in St. Louis, MO. The region also won a Zoom party hosted by Ride iQ where members and leaders will have a chance to chat and ask questions with some of the top riders and coaches.

**Strategic Planning:** A Strategic Planning workshop was held during the USPC Convention to help socialize and educate local leaders about the value of having a Strategic Plan and Goals. The committee will continue to evaluate the progress toward goals that have been established and suggests additions and adjustments to the goals and plans.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA):** New committee members and a new resource member were added and approved in October. The committee has taken time to get to know and understand the makeup of the committee with insightful conversations and defining a path forward.

The committee is continuing to review and discuss current materials (rulebooks, forms, etc.) and how they correspond with current policy and procedures regarding DEIA. This is still in the initial stages and once completed we will work with committees to recommend amendments that better address our policy and procedures.

Exploring Adaptive Riding Rules in USPC – We now have committee members that are experts in this area and have been looking to see what exactly the para and adaptive world of riding looks like. With continued

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discussions about the best path forward and understanding where previous progress was made, we are working to understand what this would look like in USPC.

**Governance:** The committee reviewed the Board Evaluation sent out after the October meeting to identify topics for additional Board training.

The committee continues to review Policies, Procedures, and By-Laws.

### **Report of the USPC Convention Committee**

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The 2024 USPC Convention will be held at the Peppermill Reno Resort, January 24-28 in Reno, NV.