**May 23rd Chagrin Schooling Show Recap**

**By Suzanne Sherbundy, NODA Schooling Show Manager**

NODA’s first schooling show of the year is in the books. After the 2020 season it was great to see so many old and new faces this show. While COVID is on the decline, our diligence over the past year allowed us to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and a successful and busy start to this season. Our May Chagrin show hit the ground running with two full rings of NODA riders and a dedicated third ring which hosted Pony Club’s Regional dressage Rally (more on that a bit farther down). The sunshine from start to finish was an added bonus that we all hope will hold true for the rest of our shows, fingers crossed.

As with so many dressage shows, our success relied on the dedication and volunteer work of many. Our May show has again reminded me, perhaps more than ever, how absolutely deep the spirit of volunteerism runs through our organization. Thank you to all the competitors for taking the big step back into the ring at a busy show filled with hustle and bustle. There were many great rides reflected in equally great scores. Thank you Chagrin Valley Farms for hosting our schooling shows. We are very appreciative of the top-notch facility and the amenities it provides. We look forward to a continued partnership.

Thank you to Big Dee’s Tack and Vet Supplies for your continued support of NODA. Many thanks to all our volunteers: scribes, runners, gate keepers, ring set-up/tear-down and office help. You all are the glue that keeps the show running. Thank you to the NODA Board, many of whom said, “Yes, I will be there to help,” before I was even able to finish asking. The knowledge and experience you bring is appreciated more than a *Thank You* can ever fully express. Thank you to Sierra Wick, our Schooling Show Secretary, for sticking it out with me in the trenches of our first schooling show. Thank you to our judges Clara Etzel, Barb Soukup, and Sara Justice, all of whom have long supported NODA.

Very special thanks go to Sara and Barb, as neither was scheduled to judge but both willingly and without hesitation said yes when asked to judge the morning of the show after a scheduled judge called off. We reached out to Barb who, perhaps with a bit of divine intervention, just happened to be in the area. She quickly changed her plans and very literally saved the day. Within 45 minutes the ring was up and running with Barb sitting at “C.” Similarly, we asked Sara mid-day to judge some of Pony Club’s rides, due to last minute scheduling conflicts. After showing and coaching, without hesitation, Sara at the *last minute* rescheduled her afternoon to judge for us.

I am happy to say the first schooling show of the season was a success. Some may be scratching their heads at that, as having a judge call off, scheduling issues, and a crazy busy show day do not sound like a recipe for success. But the willingness of NODA members to pull together and lend support when needed is unbelievable. We ended on time, had great weather, and many great rides, in spite of obstacles. This happened only because of the selfless nature and willingness of all involved to step forward when asked for help. To all who said, “Yes I’ll help,” and to riders who accepted a 45 min delay as well as the hectic nature of a three-ring show, I am forever grateful. NODA is truly filled with wonderful individuals that bring success to the forefront of all situations.

**NODA Co-hosting Pony Club Dressage Rally at our May 23rd Schooling Show**

The impact of Covid-19 on the 2020 show season was felt across many show organizations. For 2021, NODA chose to proceed with our traditional schooling show schedule and hope for the best. Pony Club, being in a similar situation, also wanted to return to a more traditional Rally schedule but were unsure of expected participant response. Seeing our schooling show series line-up, Pony Club approached NODA and asked if we would co-host their Dressage Rally. The mission of Pony Club is one familiar to anyone who supports the growth and development of horse sport. The organization has a longstanding and well- deserved reputation for developing Junior and Young Riders to be the horse people of the future. In order to hold their 2021 Dressage Rally, the regional chapter of Pony Club was limited to Chagrin Valley Farms hosting their Rally at the end of May. If they were unable to procure the venue for that weekend, they would have to cancel their Regional Dressage Rally again in 2021. NODA had a unique opportunity to help facilitate one of the Pony Club 2021 Rallies by co-hosting the show. After some discussion, the board decided to use our resources to help promote dressage opportunities to the youth of Pony Club’s Tri-State Region and co-host the Rally. We offered them use of one ring during our May 23rd schooling show at Chagrin Valley Farms.

It was a unique situation and NODA co-hosted a Dressage Rally which would have otherwise been cancelled. We can assure our members, however, that while we support the development of dressage among JRs/YRs, including those in Pony Club, there is no plan for an annual NODA/Pony Club co-hosted schooling show.

Finally, NODA would like to recognize the maturity and adaptability of the Junior and Young Riders of Pony Club. They were real troupers, and NODA is excited to be part of the development of the dressage professionals of tomorrow.

Thank you and have a good Ride!

Suzanne