
2012

January 2012

Back in November, Equestrians Institute hosted a full fun day of events in Bellevue WA, including a Fundraiser Tack Sale, EI's Annual business meeting, three educational lectures, our year-end Awards party and Social, and the USDF Region 6 meeting. It was a busy, productive, and successful day. People came early to shop, hung around all day to learn and participate in discussions, and stayed late to socialize. Some of you very cleverly showed up just in time to score amazing free food and drinks at the party. Others showed up sharp at 10 am and bought bargains from the 700+ tack sale items -- helping EI turn a tidy \$2500 profit. No matter how you participated during the day, EI is stronger because you were there. Many thanks to all our volunteers for an amazing day!

You'll notice a membership application is shown here again this month. It's a hint. Renew now and receive your full membership year of benefits. Joining EI is a good bargain and getting better all the time; you get discounts to events, eligibility for E.I. grants and awards, a Flying Changes subscription worth \$48 alone, automatic Group membership in USDF with extensive online resources, and all the ongoing news and updates delivered to your email inbox. Full benefits are listed on the website; send in the form with a check to our new address, Equestrians Institute, PO Box 1437, Bellevue WA 98009-1437.

So here is a very short New Year's Resolution list, distilled from what my trainer Wendy reminded me this week during my riding lesson. 1) Relax 2) Breathe 3) Be fair 4) Sit up straight 5) Reward the positive. Those seem like pretty good resolutions for life too. Happy New Year!

February 2012

Hooray! Online membership available now! You can still join using a paper-based form mailed in with a check, or now online using a secure system (takes a credit card, you don't need a PayPal account). Thanks everyone for waiting patiently for the online system to go live; our commitment to safeguarding member data privacy took precedence over speedy rollout.

Our 2012 event calendar is filling up. Equestrians Institute is excited to offer another full and exciting year of activities in Dressage, Eventing, and Driving. For more information about any upcoming event, please look at the EI website. Click that event date on the calendar to find related contact information, entry forms, directions to the venue, and other useful information. If you want to get involved in a particular event, or to volunteer for EI in general, contact Colleen Jones, EI's Volunteer Director.

The EI Board of Directors is that group of volunteers responsible for the overall financial and legal matters of the organization, including approving budgets, evaluating proposed new events, filing EI's taxes, and making sure we follow all current laws and regulations to maintain our nonprofit status. Each of EI's three sports have representation on the Board-- Lynn McGrew for Dressage Division, Diana Axness for Driving Division, and Meika Decher for Eventing Division. Board meetings are on selected Sundays from 3-6 pm, and you are welcome to attend any meeting. Meetings are in Bellevue at the Northwest Arts Studio, Studio B, on the following dates: February 5th, March 4th, April 1st, September 9th, October 7th. For more information about the Board, or if you just love looking at budgets, please contact me.

Do you have a suggestion or a comment about something in EI, and don't know how to communicate it to the right person? For an event-related issue, first contact that event's Organizer (Show Manager or Show Secretary or Clinic Organizer or similar) or alternatively contact the Director in the relevant EI Division (Lynn, Diana, or Meika). For membership questions, send mail to and that team will get back to you. For other issues, see the sidebar of contact information. The website also has a general feedback form and your question will get routed to the correct person by our dedicated Webmaster. All feedback is welcome, happy and not so happy, because your energy and commitment sustains this wonderful organization.

March 2012

Spring means renewal and growth. Renew your commitment to your favorite equestrian sport, and grow your knowledge, with education! Equestrians Institute supports its members with educational grants every year, with funds up to \$500 per grant. Applications are available on the EI website. Winning applicants provide a clear plan how the money will be used for educational not competitive purposes in 2012. So that means the grants can be used for pursuits like clinics, lectures, lessons but not horse show costs. Traditionally EI has offered two grants in each sport of dressage, eventing, and driving; the selection process is by committee. Youth especially encouraged to apply. EI members who have volunteered for EI in any capacity are encouraged to note that clearly on the application, because EI wants to give back to those who give time & talent to the organization. **Grant application deadline is May 1st.** Inquiries can be made to the Grants Administrator, Dawn Anderson, grants@einw.org.

Check out our 2012 calendar of events printed here, and go to the website for more information and entry forms. You can click on the date in the website calendar to see what's posed so far for that event. Looking forward to a fun and busy 2012!

April 2012

You will find wonderful invitations from all three EI Divisions -- Driving, Eventing, and Dressage -- encouraging you to try new and interesting horse activities in 2012. Check out the full-to-bursting calendar! There is energized enthusiasm for the great events you've come to expect from Equestrians Institute, and for the fresh innovations too. It's going to be a fantastic year!

Remember that **grant applications are due May 1st.** Grant winners can receive up to \$500 to help pay for educational pursuits. What a deal! Contact Dawn Anderson, grants@einw.org or check the website if you have questions.

Are your parties the talk of the town? EI is looking for 2-3 person "party planning crew" for our end-of-year social bash where we highlight our annual award winners and volunteers. Your team decides how to craft a party that is upbeat, lively, social, and rewarding for everyone involved. Event to be in December 2012. Are you the expert of fun? Come volunteer!

May 2012

EI has recently been jazzed up with fresh volunteer energy bringing needed changes and improvements and progress. Check out the new events this year, including a surge of SIX driving events at new venues, and also some fun outings for eventers to be held at the Washington State Horse Park where jumps are being built left and right. Plus our long-established recognized dressage shows are now under totally new management -- creating an upbeat and welcoming vibe so everyone involved will have a great time. Come check out what is sure to be a banner year for EI! Spectators welcome, volunteers are beloved.

EI has a few upcoming interesting projects for general consideration. Join the Party Planning Crew (2 -3 people), and devise a most amusing gala evening to highlight annual EI award winners and volunteers. If your parties are the best around, and you like people and good food and music and fun, come help.

Another project is just a cool-sounding idea right now -- an EI History Archive project. Collect historical pictures and footage, going back to our start way back in 1974. Interview and record local 'old-timers' talking about EI's early history. Digitize old photos. Track key events, decade by decade. Pull it all together in one well-crafted video, and have the chance to move audiences to sentimental tears at your sublime artistry. If you'd like to work on this, or if you just have some boxes of EI historical mementoes floating around your attic that could use a new home, please reach me for details. If there is enough enthusiasm for this project we will get it going!

June 2012

EI is proud and excited to announce our all-new website www.einw.org !! This new resource is user-friendly and full of easy-to-find information about all things EI -- events sorted by date and by discipline, show entry forms and prize lists, fun pictures, meeting minutes, and much more. Check it out and give feedback on the website itself or on EI's Facebook page. Endless thanks to our fabulous new webmaster, Maren Jensen, who capably guided the web design process. Kudos to the entire web content team, who worked hard to address requests from all corners and to post current information for all our events. Fantastic job everyone!

Do you or your business support equestrian activities in the Pacific Northwest? EI has opportunities for tangible, immediate support needed to make it all happen! See the new website einw.org for details, or see the sidebar for contact information. Here is how you can be involved:

SPONSOR an event. Sponsorships are specific advertising packages bought (by individuals or businesses) in connection with one EI event. Options and details vary by event, and are handled by the particular event committee or organizer. Click on that event to see details.

DONATE money or goods (cash, saddle pads, gift certificates, etc). Established in 1974, EI is a nonprofit organization so donations are tax-deductible. Donors whose generosity exceeds \$250 in a calendar year receive a tax donation receipt.

JOIN EI as a member. Memberships are for individuals only. Benefits include a subscription to Flying Changes (\$48 value), discounts on EI events, eligibility for grants and awards, ongoing email new updates, and regional representation to national affiliates USDF, USEA, and ADS.

VOLUNTEER at an event for a day -- or long-term behind the scenes, making decisions and handling administrative tasks.

PARTICIPATE in one of EI's many events as a rider, driver, enthusiastic fan, or casual spectator. See you sometime soon!

July 2012

What makes a group work well together? What makes an organization supple yet sturdy? I think the requirements are similar. First you need a healthy culture that honors and utilizes people's positive contributions, promotes the norm of both honesty and kindness, and joyfully considers fresh ideas. Add to that a good communication system, a habit of clear and consistent documentation of shared decisions, and ongoing planning for future goals -- and you've got the ingredients for a vibrant community of any size.

Sometimes we forget about the documentation part. Most people find it boring to write things down, but the results can be a vital link between old-timers and the new guard coming in. A good document captures the decisions of people who have thought deeply about a particular issue. It can act as a crucial reference guide to point the way when things are stormy or dark or just confusing. It can coordinate all the complicated layers of overlapping groups, to help everyone work together as smoothly as humanly possible. It can be an archive.

At the steady, beating administrative heart of EI is a key document that tells who does what, what happens, and how-- the Policies and Procedures document (affectionately known, by Board members at least, as the "P&P"). This corporate handbook lays out the basic rules under which we self-govern ourselves. Some of the rules are required by this or that federal or state law, or by the IRS, or by our insurance policy, or by our own recorded Bylaws. Some of the rules are simply negotiated social agreements we've created over time while solving problems. The P&P gets updated periodically as necessary, and is formally approved by the Board from time to time. EI members are always free to make suggestions for updates or changes. The P&P lives happily on our awesome new website in the "About EI" section. Go check it out sometime. Live long and document!

August 2012

As a perpetually busy person, I dislike August when it first rolls around. August is a torpid month. Everything grinds to a halt in the hot, stifling air. Email and phone messages, normally an electronic firehose spraying tasks into my day, sputter to a drip as everyone heads out of town. Forget about scheduling meetings, it's not gonna happen. Working on a group project? Sorry, it has to wait! For a workaholic like me, August is a quiet, stalled month. And hot sunny weather generally bums me out; I squint and sweat. I open a window, bees fly in. I leave white sunscreen residue here and there by accident, yuck. I can't take my dog with me on errands in a hot car.

But as August days slide one into another, I begin to notice the merits of a slower pace. I hang out at the barn for long lazy hours, with time to study nuances of horse behavior. I read a lot. I'm quieter. There is time to let ideas rattle around in my head, with no goal attached. I have long meandering conversations with my husband and kids about time management and the notion that creative sparks can be spawned, ironically, by utter boredom. And inevitably, August becomes that month I discover a true thing -- a rare insight, a jolt of understanding, a discovered twist to the tale -- that my normal hectic life doesn't schedule in. So this August I pledge to gladly push aside the To Do lists and step away from the computer, and let the quiet lazy days just unfold, with no agenda but to listen for something true.

September 2012

And here comes September! All three EI disciplines run events in September at beautiful venues so check out the specifics on the EI website to plan your weekends. September in the Pacific Northwest is glorious, and there is no better way to enjoy the day than watching skilled horses demonstrating talent, power, and training.

EI's 2012 Grant winners are listed below. Bravo to everyone who applied, and congrats to the winners who receive up to \$500 each, and to Dawn Anderson for her dedicated volunteer work as EI's Grant Administrator. Feeling inspired? Next year's grant applications will be due in spring 2013. Only current EI members are eligible for grants, so mark in your calendar to renew your annual EI membership at year's end. Membership year starts December 1st.

EI's 2nd Annual Fundraiser Tack Sale will happen Saturday November 17th, 2012 at the same Bellevue location as last year. It's not too early to start poking around in your closet, tack room, locker, or trailer for those items that need a new home. Tack collection dates and details will be announced later, but will likely start in late October. More details soon! Updates and news always available through email messages, Facebook, and the EI website.

October 2012

If you want uninterrupted member benefits, renew your EI membership now. Find a printable form on the website to join or renew "old-style" with paper, envelope, and check -- or easier yet join by filling in the membership form directly on the website. Be sure to double-check your email address, because EI follows the "go-green" initiative started in 2007 to rely on electronic communications and reduce paper use. This helps keep costs down dramatically. One brochure mailed to all EI members can easily cost \$1000 in printing and mailing costs -- and yes that is with the nonprofit bulk mailing rate! Instead all throughout EI we rely increasingly on E-flashes (email messaging system for EI members only), and EI's website and Facebook page for communication.

EI's 2nd Annual Fundraiser Tack Sale & Annual Meeting is coming up Saturday November 17th, 2012 at the same Bellevue location as last year. Details are posted on the website. Sell something! Buy something! Either way you are supporting EI.

November 2012

Join us Saturday November 17th for EI's second annual Fundraiser Tack Sale at the Northwest Arts Center in Bellevue WA, same place as last year, 10 am to 1 pm. Notes for shoppers: remember this is a *cash only* sale so plan to go to the bank to pick up a wad of green a few days before! Last year we had a great selection of horse and barn gear -- blankets and fly sheets, bits & bridles & reins, boots for horse legs and rider legs, girths short and long, and towering mountains of saddle pads, and much more. Notes for sellers: tack intake days are at the NWAC on three weekends leading up to the sale, days and times and details are posted on www.einw.org. Please consider donating your items this year and getting that handy tax donation receipt -- remember EI is a nonprofit and your donation can be tax deductible. Notes for EI members: EI made \$2500 overall profit last year and this year our goal is \$5000. Tack Sale proceeds help pay for EI's inescapable yearly overhead costs like insurance, equipment replacements, website hosting, and the storage unit. So a highly profitable Tack Sale means we cover our expenses and have more money for the fun stuff like parties! Our Annual Meeting for EI members happens the same day in another room, when we review the yearly financial picture, elect the 2013 Board of Directors, and sum up our super-successful 2012 year. Plan a fun outing on November 17th to do both, and see you there!

Remember to renew your EI membership in November to enjoy uninterrupted member benefits -- Flying Changes magazine subscription, Eflashes, discounts on many EI events, USDF educational resources, and more. Membership forms (online renewal, OR printable form to be mailed) available always on the EI website www.einw.org. Do it now before you get too busy with the holidays. Thank you!

December 2012

EI is proud and excited to announce that our website www.einw.org unveiled May 1st, 2012 has been awarded "Best Overall Design and Layout" from the United States Dressage Federation in the annual national GMO awards. The massive re-design of our website undertaken in early 2012 was based on thoughtful input from a great many EI members, so everyone deserves a pat on the back for collaboratively working together and achieving a beautiful, functional result. Special thanks to Maren Jensen, EI's IT Director, for her vision and guidance on this project. I am attending the USDF National Convention in New Orleans in early December and will be on hand to personally receive the honorary plaque awarded to EI for this accomplishment.

Planning is underway for all EI 2013 events. If you are interested in learning more about behind-the-scenes fun of running shows, clinics, demonstrations, and lectures for the equestrian crowd, that's great! Volunteers are critical for keeping our events running from year to year. Education is central to our core mission, and training volunteers on new and interesting tasks is vital to our ongoing success as an organization that runs popular equestrian events in the Pacific Northwest. Check out the preliminary list of 2013 events on the EI website www.einw.org, and shoot an email to the discipline Director (dressage@einw.org, eventing@einw.org or driving@einw.org) if you want to join any of the teams forming now. Not sure what you want to do? Send email to info@einw.org.

Remember to renew your EI membership NOW to enjoy uninterrupted member benefits -- Flying Changes magazine subscription, Eflashes, discounts on many EI events, USDF educational resources, and more. Membership forms (online renewal, OR printable form to be mailed) available always on the EI website. Renew now!

2011

January 2011

January in the Pacific Northwest can be a gloomy affair, dark and cold. Let's kick those winter doldrums with a super-fun party! Come to our Annual Awards Banquet to honor E.I. competition awards winners and wonderful volunteers. While you are socializing with your E.I. friends you will enjoy a full-course catered dinner buffet (including dessert!) and a fun presentation of E.I.'s 2010 event highlights. The wine & beer bar is fully hosted at this event so leave your cash at home and just come relax and enjoy yourself with free drinks at a fun and festive evening. Award winners and honored volunteers -- we'll let you know who you are -- get the special V.I.P. invitation, but this event is open to anyone who wants to help us celebrate a fantastic year. So bring your barn buddies, your spouse, or your entire family, and let the party begin! Buy tickets before Jan 15th. Saturday January 22nd, 6-9 pm, Highland Community Center, 14224 Bel-Red Road, Bellevue WA
Tickets \$35 per person

It's a little too early to be thinking about applying for an E.I. Grant; that process kicks off in spring with an April deadline. But it's not too early to volunteer to help us run this program. The amazing Beth Glosten, E.I.'s top-notch Grant Administrator for many years, is ready to hand this job over in 2011 to a new person who will inherit a well-documented process of determining \$500 educational grant winners. The Grant Administrator receives applications from E.I. Members in March, works with Division leaders choosing worthy grant recipients, and notifies the winners in May. Are you an organized person good with deadlines and handling paperwork? Would you like a short-term volunteer job? Do you support the notion that E.I. should give away FREE MONEY to people who want to further their equine education? Be the new grants administrator!

February 2011

Grab your sweetie and come to our February 13th Sunday Brunch Lecture Series "Buy, Sell, or Lease Your Horse" at the Northwest Arts Center, Bellevue WA. We'll have a panel discussion on how to fine-tune the search for the perfect horse or the perfect buyer, what a pre-purchase exam reveals, how to navigate those darn contracts, and whether or not a lease is the right answer for you. Q & A time too so bring your questions for discussion. All Sunday Brunch Lectures are FREE to E.I. members, others pay \$25 cash or check only at the door. Snacks & Valentine's chocolate provided. Sunday Feb 13th, 10:30am-12:30, Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th Street, Bellevue, WA. Send email and let us know you are coming so we save you a seat!

We have some pretty cool volunteer jobs open for anyone who wants to give back to the equestrian community. Grants Administrator is a short-term (March to May) job managing E.I.'s education grant program. You receive applications, coordinate paperwork, and ultimately give away money to deserving applicants. It's a happy thing! Also, the Sunday Brunch Lecture Series committee needs another person to help decide lecture topics, send emails, arrange chairs, and snack on free bagels. Neither job is a giant sucking black hole of commitment, so don't be shy. If you are interested please email me, and let me know what kinds of things you like to do and how you want to help.

March 2011

March is the month E.I.'s calendar pops out with fun and interesting events for you. Find details on all upcoming E.I. events on our website. Click the calendar, then click on the green-highlighted event to get full details. On Sunday March 6th we offer a dressage Schooling Show at Bridle Trails. On March 19-20 is the USDF Adult Education Clinic with Charlotte Bredahl-Baker, Olympic competitor and FEI(C) Judge, at Summervale Farm in Roy WA. This clinic -- co-sponsored by E.I., USDF, and Summervale -- has lectures and demonstration rides explaining the necessity, structure, and benefits of using the training pyramid. For details contact Jana Steffen.

We recently updated the underlying technology on E.I.'s website so you may notice some changes -- even the address is shorter and snappier. Our goal is to make the website fresh, constantly updated, and useful to our members. We are committed to creating a dynamic website that is also easy and intuitive to use. On it you'll find a wealth of relevant information, and if you create a private login account on this website you'll get access to even more goodies. We are continuously improving the look-and-feel of this great new tool, and we would love your feedback, so don't be shy in submitting ideas and pointing out any issues you see. Many thanks to Peter Larsen for spear-heading the campaign to revamp our website technology to take advantage of amazing new technical tools available! And yes, we heard you ... we are working on providing online member renewals for the future.

April 2011

Equestrians' Institute is pleased to offer annual Education Grants. Multiple grants of \$500 each are offered by E.I.'s three Divisions -- Dressage, Eventing, and Driving. You must be a current E.I. member to apply. **The deadline for Grant applications is May 1st, 2011.** Find all the important details and the Grant Application on the E.I. website. Questions? E.I.'s Grant Administrator is Dawn Anderson. A grant sounds good, but not a current E.I. member? It's not too late to become a member for \$55 -- mail your membership form today! Members get regular email announcements on intriguing events and opportunities, plus discounts to all E.I.-sponsored events.

April is Volunteer Month! Thanks to our fabulous Volunteer Director Colleen Jones, we make volunteering an easy, fun, and educational experience for you. Thoughtfully managing the time provided by our volunteers is important to us, and how we make it rewarding for you! Plus volunteers always get amazing volunteer 'swag'. Find out about specific volunteer opportunities on our specialized volunteer system, accessible via our website under "Volunteering".

It's time again for the popular "How to Scribe" clinic Thursday April 7, 6:30pm - 9:00pm at the home of Beth Glosten (and RiderPilates). Beth, an "L" program graduate, will cover protocols, requirements, relevant rules, and helpful hints to prepare for the job of scribe. As well, real time scribing will be practiced as Beth "judges" sample tests at Training, First, and Second levels. Bring pens and a clipboard - test sheets provided. Sign up is required as space is limited. Fee payable at the door: \$10 for Equestrians' Institute members, \$20 for nonmembers. Contact Beth and leave a message with your contact information.

May 2011

Has this ever happened to you? You agree to volunteer at a horse show. The day of the show, you get up early and drive over an hour to the show grounds. You aren't exactly sure where to go, so you walk around looking for someone official. Suddenly an irate announcer yells your name over the loudspeaker and "PLEASE report to the show office for your scheduled shift!" You cringe, and quickly head that way. Inside are several people feverishly working, some barking orders into walkie-talkies, with a long line of competitors waiting to be helped. You squeeze past the line, earning glares from those waiting, and introduce yourself to the person behind the desk. You get brusque instructions and a clipboard, an impatient finger pointing out the door. You go to your station, and fumble around doing unfamiliar tasks, worried about your mistakes. After hours standing in the hot sun you get really thirsty because you forgot to bring a water bottle. At the end of your shift you turn in the clipboard to the office. Nobody thanks you, so you just take your sunburned self and quickly get out, thinking "Never again!"

Take heart, loyal volunteer! Equestrians' Institute has worked very hard the past few years to create a wonderful Volunteer Program and to AVOID scenarios like above. We cherish our volunteers and treat them well. Volunteers can expect clear instructions, friendly interactions, complimentary food & drinks, shade, bathroom breaks, and E.I. logo gear to take home. But most importantly, volunteers always receive our heartfelt thanks because without you the show simply cannot go on. Consider volunteering in 2011, especially if you have had a bad experience in the past. Contact Volunteer Director Colleen Jones, see website for opportunities in 2011.

USEF's recent changes to helmet rules encourages riders to now pay extra attention to personal safety gear. Is your gear outdated or maybe broken? Does your helmet actually fit your head correctly? Our next Sunday Brunch Lecture is "Safety Awareness"! Representatives from Charles Owen will answer all your questions, explain new technologies available now, and give helpful demonstrations on equipment fit and function. Sunday May 22nd, 10:30am-12:30, Northwest Arts Center, Bellevue. As always this Lecture is FREE to EI Members, nonmembers pay \$25, pre-registration REQUIRED on website. Co-sponsored with Olson's Tack. Be Safe!

June 2011

In the past E.I. was a small home-grown club and "The Board" made all decisions big and small. That's not how it works now. E.I. has grown and changed since 1974 so over time procedures have evolved. How do all those events on the calendar get arranged? Who exactly does what?

E.I. is divided into FOUR Divisions. Three correspond to E.I.'s three sports: Dressage Division, Eventing Division, and Driving Division. Each Division is independently responsible for deciding what events and activities will best serve their sport. Each Division finds event organizers and volunteers, creates budgets, advertises on E.I.'s website and Facebook, and handles overall management of events. Each Division is responsible for following applicable USEF, USDF, USEA, and/or ADS rules.

The fourth Division in E.I. is the General Division. This is E.I.'s central administrative group and handles areas spanning the other three Divisions; membership, insurance, year-end awards, grants, and bookkeeping duties like paying for storage and other fees. This Division also maintains E.I.'s website, Facebook, and Twitter services.

So what does the Board of Directors do? The Board oversees the legal and financial health of the organization by reviewing and approving all Division budgets, by ensuring taxes are done properly, and by safeguarding our nonprofit status. The Board monitors changes in nonprofit laws & regulations, and decides on needed adjustments to E.I.'s governing documents. The head of each Division also serves on the Board of Directors so each sport is always represented. The Board engages in broader governance duties, reviewing long-term strategy to consider how E.I. can best serve equestrian needs in the entire Pacific Northwest.

E.I. is a volunteer-run organization looking for good ideas and willing workers. We are committed to creating small, manageable volunteer jobs so any amount of time you give can be a happy and productive contribution. Join us!

July 2011

Like many horse show organizers wrestling with the news of a significant equine viral outbreak situation, E.I. decided to cancel L'Aperitif -- one of our regular dressage shows held in May -- at fairly short notice. This decision was made after many days of careful monitoring of news updates from the state veterinarian and from the various vet hospitals, and after much intense discussion and assessment by our show management. It was not a decision made lightly. E.I. leaders also own and show horses and are acutely aware of the cost, inconvenience, and disappointment that comes to show competitors looking forward to competing in what turns out to be a cancelled show. Please believe us -- we do understand! Fortunately the local quarantine recommendations have ended, and we should have an uninterrupted show season from here on out.

Below on the calendar you may notice a couple of new meetings about Bylaws revisions, hosted by E.I.'s Board of Directors. (Huh? Why? Boring! Admit it, you are thinking that right now...) For the past several months, the Board has been working closely with an attorney to assess our existing Bylaws and decide how to bring them into compliance with current federal & state law, and with nonprofit best practices. Because E.I. is a member-run nonprofit, and our organization always strives for open and transparent governance on all such matters, we invite you to find out all about it at an open Q&A Town Hall Forum on Sunday July 31st, 3-5 pm. We will also hold a special meeting for E.I. members to vote on these revised Bylaws on Sunday September 11th from 1-3 pm. Both meetings will be at the Northwest Arts Center in Bellevue. More information will be posted on our website to keep members up to date on these necessary administrative tasks.

Also keep an eye out for the upcoming new Policies and Procedures manual; this will become the go-to handbook documenting 'how stuff gets done' in E.I. and a useful tool for coordinating work across different Divisions, committees, and groups. As always, our goal here is to maximize the efficacy of our precious donated volunteer time and effort by ensuring all contributions have maximum impact! Hear the bracing clarion call -- Better Living Through Documentation! Umm, so maybe not the best slogan. We'll work on that too.

August 2011

August brings a short lull to the E.I. calendar, a little mid-year break. We will kick back into high gear in the fall with more great E.I. educational, recreational, and competitive events.

So now is a great time to take stock of all your horse gear and figure out what you need and what you don't! Clean out your tack locker, prowl through the barn, rustle around in those shelves and closets, reorganize the horse trailer, and peek if you dare under the seats in your car... E.I. is having a fundraiser Tack Sale Saturday November 19th and we need your stuff! Soon we will start taking clean & useable tack, equestrian clothing, barn & farm items, horse supplies, and anything you think might appeal to a horse person. The goal is to raise money for E.I. in a fun and productive way!

Don't forget we have a special E.I. member meeting to vote on Bylaws revisions that will bring E.I. into compliance with current nonprofit laws & regulations. This latest Bylaws version is carefully designed to be legally robust and enduring until far into the future. Join us September 11th, from 1 -3 pm, at the Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th Street, Bellevue WA and also get a peek at the new Policies and Procedures manual that will serve as the go-to handbook for how we coordinate work across the multiple Divisions, committees, and groups in E.I. See you there!

Flying Changes - President's Reports 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 by Rebecca H. Chatfield, Ph.D.

September 2011

Looking ahead to November 19th ... we need your horsey gear for the EI fundraiser Tack Sale! Watch email & Facebook for updates on how, when & where we can receive anything you want to sell. Collection will start soon, so start rounding up those clean, gently used items. What a fun way to recycle useful gear and support EI too!

The EI Board of Directors is pleased to announce that EI's new *Policies and Procedures* document is well underway with ongoing input from multiple EI Divisions, committees, and groups. The P&P is meant to be a collaborative effort to capture and explain best practices across all corners of EI. Have you been an event organizer or a committee member in EI? Do you want to help create and write up this crucial form of organizational memory? Would love to hear from you!

In the past, EI members would sometimes vote on miscellaneous updates to the Bylaws as a way to manage changes in our procedures. Now we know it is a better approach to make the Bylaws a sturdy, static legal instrument to safeguard our organization for the long haul, while the P&P document becomes the focus of our innovations and group updates as we cruise along. In making this shift we follow modern conventions for nonprofit organizations everywhere. But we do need to do one last formal task to wrap up the many months of hard work on this transition-- EI members must vote to approve the revised Bylaws that plugs all the legal holes, brings us into compliance with current nonprofit laws & regulations, and lets us all breathe a big sigh of relief. So this is your last reminder for the special EI member meeting and vote September 11th, from 1 -3 pm, at the Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th Street, Bellevue WA. A simple majority approval vote of those members attending the meeting is all that is required. All relevant documents are on the EI.

October 2011

Are you part of the EI community? Members receive great benefits -- timely updates about local events, discounts on registration fees for shows and clinics and other events, and an annual subscription to Flying Changes magazine. Members qualify for EI's year-end award system too. Members have voting rights in the organization, and serve as leaders on event planning and governance. Because EI is a Group Member Organization (GMO) of the United States Dressage Federation (USDF), EI members also receive USDF benefits which include educational resources and Connection magazine, and the ability to earn USDF credits and awards. EI relies on membership fees to help fund ongoing activities. The membership year starts November 30th and the membership form is on the website. You can renew *now* for 2012, and that insures that your Flying Changes subscription won't miss a beat.

Are you a fan of EI, but not sure yet about becoming a member? There are other ways to participate in the EI community. Many businesses and individuals support EI by donating money, goods, or services; because EI is a nonprofit, your donations to EI are fully tax deductible. You can also participate by attending one of our many wonderful educational or competitive events each year in the equestrian sports of dressage, eventing, and driving! And of course, our huge pool of loyal EI volunteers -- who work hard at every single EI event -- are indispensable to our ongoing success. You might be the friend or spouse of an EI member, helping out just for fun, but as a volunteer you are just as much a part of the EI community!

Our Annual meeting is November 19th, and we are holding a fundraiser Tack Sale! Information on collection of gently used tack & horse/barn items is available on the EI website. We'll be taking items in October and November up to a few days before the sale. The all-day event will be at the Northwest Arts Center in Bellevue WA, so come early and stay late!

November 2011

E.I. is kicking off the holiday season with a fun full day of events on Saturday, November 19th, at the Northwest Arts Center in Bellevue WA. The E.I. Fundraiser Tack Sale will be your chance to pick up some shopping bargains! The Tack Sale starts at 10 am and is our big fundraising event this year, so come early and bring just the green stuff because this is a CASH ONLY sale. Enjoy educational presentations on saddle fit, biomechanics, and rider motivation too. E.I. members can attend the E.I. Annual business meeting (3-4 pm) for an overview of the year's accomplishments and to formally elect the 2012 Board members. Everyone is welcome to stay after the business meeting to enjoy a relaxed social event -- with FREE wine, beer, appetizers, and good cheer -- focusing on the 2011 E.I. Awards winners. Interested in regional dressage news? Donna Longacre, USDF's Region 6 Director, is running the annual mini-convention for Region 6 here too. Quite a full and exciting day for Equestrians' Institute! Set your GPS to 9825 NE 24th Street, Bellevue WA 98004 and get yourself there early for the shopping and stay late for the socializing!

We are still taking donations and consignments to the Tack Sale, please call to make an appointment for November 5th or 12th, the two Saturdays before the sale. Please call Norma or Susan to schedule an appointment. Clean, gently used (or new) tack, equestrian clothing, or barn/farm items will be accepted.

Our membership year is December 1st to November 30th, so print out a member renewal form today from the EI website and send it in with your check. All the wonderful benefits to joining E.I. can be found on the form -- discounts to events, eligibility for E.I. grants and awards, a Flying Changes subscription worth \$48 alone, automatic membership in USDF as part of the GMO program, and all the news and updates hot off the press! Join or renew today! See the website under "Join EI" for all the details. Send to our NEW address, Equestrians Institute, PO Box 1437, Bellevue WA 98009-1437. Early renewals qualify for raffle prizes!

December 2011

Happy Holidays from Equestrians Institute. Take the time each day to connect with your loved ones -- human and otherwise!

Are you that person that waits until March, April, or May to renew your yearly E.I. membership? Are you waiting until closer to show season to decide if an E.I. membership is "worth it"? Here's the reason to renew today: our membership year is December 1st to November 30th, and the fees stay the same all year, so renewing now means you enjoy the full year of benefits with no interruptions! If you aren't a member, consider that joining E.I. gives you ongoing great benefits like discounts to events, eligibility for E.I. grants and awards, a Flying Changes subscription worth \$48 alone, automatic membership in USDF as part of the GMO program including E-Trak resources worth \$35, and all the ongoing news and updates delivered to your email inbox. You can also feel good about supporting the equestrian sports of dressage, eventing, and driving in this region. Use the form on this page (full form also available on website under "Join EI") and send with a check to our new address, Equestrians Institute, PO Box 1437, Bellevue WA 98009-1437. You'll be glad you did!

2010

January 2010

The January trees are stripped bare, resting and dormant. Winter time hibernation seems like a fine idea right now as we all hide under layers of fleece during short dreary days. Yet behold the volunteers who run E.I. year-round; we are as busy as ever planning E.I.'s 2010 Calendar of Events. Now is a wonderful time to regroup, to engage in long-term strategic planning, and to brainstorm new ways of working and communicating. While our calendar looks sparse in the early months of the year, we are fully engaged behind the scenes, gearing up to provide the PNW equestrian community many wonderful educational and competitive opportunities ahead.

One of our goals for 2010 is to make volunteering for E.I. easier and simpler. We aim to leverage some useful existing and upcoming technology tools to reach out to more people and to make participating in E.I. even more attractive. Becoming more involved should be a fun & joyful expansion to your equestrian pursuits, not a dreary burden to put off until you are "less busy". Who is ever less busy?

Now for New Year's resolutions: First, if you haven't already renewed your E.I. membership for 2010, do it now. Everything we do hinges on having members to do it for! Second, watch the E.I. website for changes and announcements as we put into place some great new ideas. You may have noticed one already -- the E.I. Facebook page has fresh pictures and news. Become a fan today! Third resolution: make a true commitment to yourself that this year you will become engaged, become involved, and get the most you can out of our fantastic local equestrian community. Looking forward to seeing you in 2010!

February 2010

I've been the President of Equestrians' Institute for one year now. Occasionally I describe to non-horsey others what that means. I've discovered it is easiest and most accurate to say "E.I. is an organization that puts on equestrian events." If the listener wants more, or asks, for example, if that means we handle rodeos or polo matches, then my response deepens. I describe dressage, eventing, and combined driving. I mention the fact that we manage an impressive number of horse shows. I highlight the educational lectures and clinics we weave throughout the year. I point out that E.I. was founded in 1974 so we have some historical perspective too. If the person is really, really interested (or held captive by my enthusiasm!) I might get to topics like the grants we offer, the demographics of our membership, or the mechanics of event insurance. And if someone wants to know how E.I. "works", I describe how we use a fairly sophisticated slate of information technologies to coordinate an integrated network of individuals and committees. We currently have 21 E.I. committees, the number and type flexing slightly over time as our work demands.

Spotlighting each area is another way to describe E.I., so I'd like to start doing that here. This month's topic is Grants. In fact, the new grant deadline is April 1st so if you are intrigued by the notion of financial support to pursue your equestrian dream, you might want to perk up here. Each year E.I. provides six \$500 grants in the following categories: Adult Dressage, JR/YR Dressage, Adult Eventing, JR/YR Eventing, Adult Driving, and Junior Driving. Grants fund educational experiences and require a formal application process and review. The E.I. website has details & examples under the 'Education' section. Beth Glosten, whose dedication to E.I. spans many years, handles this process. Good luck!

Flying Changes - President's Reports 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 by Rebecca H. Chatfield, Ph.D.

March 2010

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. --William Butler Yeats

This month I shine the spotlight on the educational opportunities offered by Equestrians' Institute. We are pleased to offer an interesting array of clinics & lectures to our members to fulfill our educational mission. The ever-popular dressage Scribing Clinic is happening again on April 8th; this is a fantastic way to learn what happens in the judge's box at C, and is a fun volunteer job at the schooling and recognized dressage shows during the year. We are also very excited to offer a new Lecture Series this year that is absolutely FREE to E.I. members (\$25 for non-members) which combines a tasty Sunday brunch with an interesting talk. Respected local veterinarian Dr. Steve Latimer will discuss "Advances in Management of Soft Tissue Injuries" on Sunday March 7th, 10:30 am - 1pm, at the Issaquah City Hall Eagle Room. Preregistration for both seminars is required, please see our website for details.

We are open to suggestions from you about future Lecture Series talks. What topics interest you? Do you have a suggestion for a guest speaker? How does a panel discussion sound? We have some flexibility now so let's take advantage of it! Send ideas about what lights your fire.

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself. -- Chinese Proverb

April 2010

April is Volunteer Month for Equestrians' Institute. Volunteering is a clever way to get 1) experiential education at equestrian events 2) social networking done the old-fashioned way and 3) fun that also boosts your cosmic 'good karma' rating. Also you get free stuff!

To see available volunteer opportunities go to the E.I. website click on 'Volunteers', then on 'sign up online'. This sends you to the MyVolunteers linked program that we use to manage tasks and communications for our large group of volunteers. Your information is kept private and used only by E.I. Directors to contact you for volunteer activities. Our Director of Volunteers, Colleen Jones, works very hard to make sure that you are matched up with appropriate tasks, receive timely updates, and get friendly care & direction when you bring your warm body to us.

Here's another line of breadcrumbs for you: all people who use the software during the month of April to commit to any 2010 E.I. volunteer shift will be entered in a special drawing for some new and rather awesome E.I. merchandise.

And really, everyone wins because volunteering is a fun, easy way to connect to other local equestrian-minded folks and the best way to ensure that E.I. can continue to provide enjoyable, successful events. Who doesn't love a win-win scenario? See you soon!

May 2010

As May flowers bloom the E.I. calendar likewise bursts into a colorful array of offerings. Coming up in May are the Sonja Vracko Dressage Ride-and-Review, a BJ Heuving driving/long-lining clinic, the Polestar Farm Eventing clinic and Hunter Pace, and our first recognized dressage show -- L'Aperitif at Bridle Trails. Following soon after in June are a Driving Trial & Pace, a Lecture Series talk by Dave Freeze on Sports Psychology for Riders, and the Chablis/Beaujolais recognized Dressage Shows at Donida Farm. The calendar below has more details, as does our website. With so many wonderful choices you are sure to add some variety to your equestrian bouquet! Come join us as a participant, a spectator, or as a volunteer.

This month I highlight the wonderful people who manage the mechanics of your E.I. membership. Polly Kranick is one of E.I.'s long-time champions who tirelessly, behind the scenes and with very little fanfare, processes the membership applications, handles USDF and Flying Changes fees, updates the database, and patiently answers membership questions sent her way. She also shepherds the creation of the E.I. Member Directory, along with Cinda Peters whose donated professional graphic design work makes our Directory so polished and beautiful every year. Others who help keep membership matters humming along are Gunn Cooper, our Treasurer with

Flying Changes - President's Reports 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 by Rebecca H. Chatfield, Ph.D.

the financial eagle-eye; Peter Larsen, always on call for data management issues; and Shelly Navarre, a human "swiss-army knife", who along with her very many talents also is great at designing on-line forms. Thank you Membership Team!

June 2010

In summer, E.I. offers a fun selection of equestrian activities to engage your mind and to entice you outside to enjoy fun horse events in beautiful locations. The Sunday Brunch Lecture Series 'Sports Psychology for Riders' talk is June 6 in Bellevue at the Northwest Arts Center and promises to be both inspirational and useful. Check out the Outdoor Arena Driving Trial & Pace on June 5-6, and the Chablis & Beaujolais Dressage recognized shows at Donida Farm on June 18-20. Soon after there is the Champagne dressage 'two-shows-in-one' weekend July 17-18 at Donida. See the E.I. website for details.

A special thank you to Jeremy Steinberg for his fantastic lessons at the recent Junior/Young Rider dressage clinic and to Karen Moore of Pacific Moon Equestrian Center for providing her gorgeous venue, and to all the auction contributors. Participants came from near and far (Seattle, Tri-Cities, Eugene!) and the riders made clear improvements under Jeremy's expert tutelage. The Region 6 Young Riders (www.Region6YoungRiders.com) are currently raising critical funds to travel with horses to NAJYRC championships in Kentucky in late July, and urgently need donations from individuals and corporations to make it possible. Put the Young Riders to work at the Beaujolais (June 19-20) and Champagne (July 17-18) dressage shows at Donida; they are available to help you park trailers, unload, braid, pick stalls, and clean tack -- and will gratefully accept your donations! Check at the Show Office on site for more information. Emma Dye, Region 6 JR/YR Coordinator is working very hard behind the scenes to support this endeavor, so contact her to find out how you can help this group of dedicated young riders achieve their dreams.

July 2010

Break out the Champagne ... Magnum and Crystal Champagne recognized dressage shows are July 17-18 at Donida Farms. We still need some volunteers for these shows; contact Colleen Jones and let her know you would like to help out. We have 2 hour shifts, 4 hour shifts, or longer if you really need to work on your tan. All volunteers get great gifts for helping out. No experience necessary for most jobs; we'll train you on the spot...and if you prove yourself worthy you might even get to ride in the golf carts. What a deal!

This month I'd like to shine a little sun & happiness on two E.I. volunteers who do "hidden" jobs that are so essential to keeping things running smoothly. Lezlie Wolff has been the Flying Changes liaison for quite a while. She reminds other E.I. members to turn in their reports, she fixes our typing errors, and she keeps a close eye on word counts and reins us in when we start getting verbose. Without Lezlie you wouldn't be reading this column right now. Lezlie, thanks so much for your steady commitment to the job.

Another behind-the-scenes task that is so critical to the success of our E.I. events is handling insurance details. Chriss Cardwell has done a super job the last few years keeping track of the large number of E.I. events that need insurance coverage. She cheerfully and promptly contacts our insurance agent whenever we need some paperwork done. It's one of those unseen administrative tasks for which we can say a hearty thank you Chriss!

August 2010

Equestrians' Institute reached a modern milestone recently... we now have over 500 fans on Facebook! Check out our Facebook page for news and updates on current events and don't be shy if you have comments or fun pictures to post. Thank you to Peter Larsen -- and to frequent FB contributors Colleen Jones, Kellie Larsen, Shelly Navarre, Tracy Garland and Chriss Cardwell -- who have been instrumental in keeping our information infrastructure current, useful, and exciting.

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Our final 2010 dressage schooling show happens Sunday August 29th at San Sebastian Equestrian Center in Redmond. Tip your hat to Show Manager Kellie Larsen in appreciation for her skilled administration of E.I.'s successful, long-running dressage schooling show series. There is still time to participate in this show so go to the E.I. website under the "Show Office" tab to find registration information. Schooling shows are a great way to dip your toe into showing, fine-tune your skills in a safe environment, habituate a green horse to new sights, or just meet up with your barn buddies for a fun day. See you there!

September 2010

September is a very exciting month for E.I.'s Eventing fans -- the annual E.I. Horse Trials are September 17-19 at the Northwest Equestrian Center in Rainier, WA. This year's event is sure to be a crowd-pleaser with new jumps & course design. Riders compete in three disciplines -- dressage, cross-country, and show jumping -- so spectators always have a lot to watch. This will be an extra-full show as this year is also the U.S. Eventing Association Area VII Championships. Volunteers gratefully welcomed, no experience necessary. People are needed for hospitality, office help, stewards, timers, jump judges, jump crew, bridle number collector, and many other tasks so if you have a few hours to give please do! See the E.I. website for volunteer sign-up positions handled online. For more information about the fine sport of Eventing, see the USEA website www.useventing.com.

Sometimes we have an embarrassment of riches on the calendar! The USDF/Northwest Region 6 Dressage Championships are also the third weekend in September (16-19) held at the beautiful and recently renovated Donida Farms in Auburn WA. For information on this event please see www.usdf. Ranging further afield, eyes turn in late September to Lexington KY to the site of the World Equestrian Games. A few will be heading there as lucky spectators watching the best riders in the world. Tickets and lodging are scarce and most people made arrangements months or even years ago. So if you are going to the WEG, consider writing up your "I was there" experience to share with others back home!

October 2010

Have you ever discovered your horse has an enormously swollen eye? Or unsaddled without riding because your horse is suddenly just slightly lame? Or held a bandage to a bloody wound and thought "Wow, that could need stitches"? Injuries and illness can be unsettling. Here is a chance to hear about the most common calls received by your veterinarian -- and how to handle those scenarios. Be informed, and be prepared! Dr. Ron Colton of Evergreen Equine gives us the scoop at E.I.'s Sunday Brunch Lecture Series on Sunday, October 17th 10:30am-12:30 at the Northwest Arts Center(NWAC), 9825 NE 24th Street, Bellevue WA. Registration FREE to E.I. members, non-members pay \$25 cash or check at the door. Sunday Brunch buffet generously donated by Olson's Tack. Seating is limited.

This year we are splitting the Annual Meeting (business only, held Nov 2010) from the Awards Banquet (year-end E.I. awards & dinner, held January 2011) to better correspond with E.I.'s yearly membership cycle (Dec-Nov) and also the timeframe needed for ordering awards. At the November Annual Meeting topics are 2010 financial overview, voting on current issues, USDF/GMO news, and election of new Board of Directors. Will it be boring? Not if you like knowing just how we pull off 20+ separate equestrian events each year with a combined budget of several hundred thousand dollars. Will there be booze? Sorry, you have to wait until the Awards Banquet in January for that! November Annual Meeting is open to any current 2010 E.I. member and RSVP not necessary -- November 13th, 3-5pm, NWAC, Bellevue. Come "get up in E.I.'s business"!

November 2010

Want to get a peek at the nuts-and-bolts of the business of Equestrians' Institute? Would you like a condensed overview of our finances for 2010, or to help articulate our vision and strategy for 2011?? Would you like to learn more about our organization including new volunteer opportunities? Here's your chance to mingle, learn, and vote -- come to the Annual Business Meeting on Saturday November 13, 3-5pm, Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th St, Bellevue. Open to all 2010 E.I. members, no admission fee, snacks provided! Since annual E.I. awards will be given out separately and later-- at the January Awards Banquet -- we frankly expect attendance to be lower than usual at this November Business meeting. So if you are feeling a need to be "Bossy Boots" about your favorite issue, come get some airtime.

Our new membership year begins December 1st but renewing NOW means uninterrupted issues of Flying Changes magazine, and ongoing useful email announcements to members, and E.I. discounts on clinics and other special events. Current E.I. members will get email reminders and pre-printed forms for convenience. You can also always find blank 2011 membership forms on our website. We hope to further automate our member renewal process in the future but for now we ask you once again to mail the paper membership forms. Be especially vigilant about the accuracy of your email address because that is our best and usual way to contact members during the year! We have included an option on the form to donate to E.I. if you are feeling the love. Renew your yearly membership by December 1st to be eligible for cool prizes. Thanks for your support!

December 2010

What did Equestrians' Institute do in 2010? It turns out, quite a bit.

We ran our five well-established recognized USDF dressage shows (L'Aperitif, Chablis, Beaujolais, Champagne-Magnum, and Champagne-Crystal) and a handful of dressage schooling shows. We pulled off an awesome Horse Trials in September which was also the USEA Area VII Championships. We gleaned useful tips at educational lectures on soft-tissue injuries and common horse vet emergencies. We danced with our horses during two musical freestyle clinics, learned how to be the judge's best friend in a scribing clinic, and enjoyed nature during an outdoor arena driving trial & pace. We practiced centered driving and classical dressage and long-lining in clinics with masters of the craft. We took our horses up and over and all around a huge beautiful new venue, the just-being-built Washington State Horse Park in Cle Elum. So many choices! 2010 brought us joyful activities with our horses.

We also spent a lot of time approving budgets and creating new procedures and staffing committees, and all those business-y things that have to happen within any organization. We have hundreds of members and several committees big and small managed by extremely dedicated and hard-working volunteers. Thanks to some die-hard E.I. enthusiasts who skillfully run our events & steward our resources, financially we are very solid. That's quite a feat for a nonprofit right now!

We also have small & easy volunteer jobs too, in case you'd like to help out but your time is limited. Let us know what kinds of tasks you enjoy, and we'll find you a fun and rewarding E.I. volunteer task. And renew your membership now! Happy Holidays and see you in 2011!

2009

March 2009

Change is in the air. What an extraordinary time for our country, our economy, and our planet; as Americans we are simultaneously hopeful and cautious, collectively gripped by an exciting new vision of progress ,yet personally struggling with grinding demands on our time, money, and energies. As 2009 unfolds we mark not only a new year but a new era. It is time to renew our commitments to those pursuits that matter most to our hearts by refining a new set of responses to old constraints. Chalk it up to our innate resilience in times of challenge.

As the new President of Equestrians' Institute, my role is to help usher forth creative solutions for horse enthusiasts to pursue their passions even in these leaner times. E.I. will help you answer general-interest questions, such as "How do I get connected to the local equestrian community?" and "What local horse events happen around here?". We also help you answer more granular inquiries, such as "How do I continue my education as a rider on a reduced budget?" and "Which clinic is next month?" or even "How can I network with other horse owners to trailer to shows/buy hay in bulk/ find a great barn?" For several years E.I. has maintained an active website that is a virtual treasure trove of information, and one that is constantly evolving and changing as good ideas emerge. Check out the website. While you're there be sure to sign up as a member to receive timely notices and discounts on E.I.-sponsored events.

In 2009 E.I. offers recognized dressage shows (L'Aperitif, Chablis, Beaujolais, and Champagne Classic) as well as four dressage schooling shows for a show season that spans March to September. We are delighted to sponsor Karin Robinson Freestyle clinics, a First Aid clinic, a Ride-n-Review Clinic for Eventers, and the E.I. Horse Trials at Donida. In late March is the Conrad Schumacher Symposium, a unique and intensive educational weekend for the equestrian enthusiast. The Schumacher Symposium has been generously supported by a grant from The Dressage Foundation, for which E.I. is very grateful.

As a nonprofit organization we rely on the money generated by membership dues, show fees, occasional grants, and our annual fundraising Auction. We are delighted to be able to consistently offer such a rich variety of learning opportunities for you each year.

So now you have tools to answer some of the questions posed above. Quick pop quiz -- think of something you can do that is easy on the pocketbook, provides a exciting educational experience, and unlocks a whole new network of resources. It's simple: pick an E.I. event and VOLUNTEER. Find all the event details on our website. Sign up using our online MyVolunteer software, or contact the event organizer directly. You'll be glad you did.

I'm proud and thrilled to become the next President of Equestrians' Institute, taking the reins from outgoing President Jana Steffen who always provided a wonderfully calm, steady, tactful hand. What fortifies me most is the sheer dedication of so many productive, engaged E.I. members working hard to bring new learning opportunities to the local equestrian community. Yet organizations are a curious combination of fixture and fluidity; there is always room for improvement. I welcome input on how to make Equestrians' Institute more useful, more nimble, and more relevant. Contact me anytime.

April 2009

Without a roadmap, it can be difficult to know if you are on your way to a desired destination, or wandering towards a dead end. That is why E.I. spends time on annual strategic planning to keep us on track and minimize the U-turns. Strategic planning sessions for 2009 generated immediate goals, condensed to this simplified list:

1. Improve accuracy and timeliness of all financial reporting
2. Expand the volunteer base by 20%
3. Manage succession planning for turnover on board and in key positions
4. Improve usability of website

These goals are intertwined; success in one area will bolster success in all. We are already busily working on all goals on this list, as well as others identified in the 2009 Strategic Planning Document (available for your perusal on the website). For example, we have added PayPal service on the website to be used for event fees and soon for membership dues. We have investigated tweaks to the MyVolunteer software used by E.I. to more seamlessly manage information for event organizers. A steady stream of documents and instructions from outgoing board members have helped orient incoming members. We've begun collaborative work on financial reporting strategies that will work "in the field" at events, while adhering to strict accounting principles for better fiscal responsibility. We even finished an inventory project that itemized several boxes of "volunteer gifts & goodies" in our storage unit!

Most people participate in and know about E.I. by attending our equestrian events. Time is precious and those who choose to give their time to E.I. activities - as competitors, spectators, or volunteers - are best rewarded when the events are thoughtfully managed. Success is providing educational experiences for local horse enthusiasts where everyone involved believes "That was time well spent!" That is, in a nutshell, E.I.'s mandate. Our primary organizational goal is to be the well-oiled machine that cranks out a series of successful and rewarding events.

So how do we do this? Here we invite you all to peek behind the velvet curtain to see the metaphorical cogs and pulleys of E.I. as an organization. We constantly evaluate our current processes and assess their efficacy and logic. We interview and document the knowledge of our resident experts. We rifle through the files. We talk. We brainstorm better and smarter ways to accomplish tasks. We applaud efforts of those who have contributed in the past and thoughtfully build on the work already done. Our aim is to create procedures that efficiently coordinate our mutual efforts, that recruit and leverage enough volunteer hours for successful events, and that generate just enough stickiness in organizational memory so that we never have to reinvent the wheel from one year to the next. These efforts are of course ongoing, always mindful that event organizers and Board members benefit too from the adhering to the motto of "time well spent".

We depend heavily on our dedicated core of volunteers and the careful stewardship of the Board members. Heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Board members Jana Steffen, Laura Scholten, Linda Mackin, Michele Nolte, Heidi Gloudemans, and Laura McGillicuddy for your service and dedication to E.I. and your willingness to share expertise with the incoming Board members taking your spot. Thanks also to Shelly Navarre our former Secretary who stays at the helm as Dressage Director. Welcome new board members Gunn Cooper (Treasurer), Kathleen Butler (Secretary), Maren Jensen (Promotions), Matt Eagan (Education), Colleen Jones (Volunteers), Tracy Garland and Barb Penniston (Driving).

Check out the calendar here and the expanded version on our website to investigate what E.I. is offering participants for 2009. Note that our annual fundraising auction has been rescheduled for later in the year. Our show season is moving into full swing, so be sure to check deadlines for entry forms. Happy Riding!

May 2009

The Conrad Schumacher Symposium (held March 28-29, 2009) exemplifies the quality education that E.I. offers the local equestrian community. Participants ventured from Canada, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and eastern Washington, braving unseasonably chilly temperatures, to experience in person the key lessons from Mr. Schumacher's proven riding system. A rapt audience of 200+ people watched and learned as very talented hand-picked riders & horses demonstrated core concepts with grace, power, and tact. This sold-out event was a complicated endeavor that could not have happened without the help of a great many people. Taking care of demo riders and all of Mr. Schumacher's needs was the capable team of Gail VanDeMoere, Lyn Anderson, Merryll Vines, and Jennifer Johnson. Bear Creek Farm in Woodinville WA was the lovely, high-class venue -- many thanks to Leigh Cochran and also to boarders who graciously surrendered their riding space! Major financial sponsors were The Dressage Foundation, Olson's Tack Shop, The Gift Horse Saddlery, and PCC Natural Markets, and sincere thanks as well to all of our sponsors who contributed funds, time, and energy to this event. Many willing volunteers helped with on-site logistics and all the small but necessary details. Special thanks to Gunn Cooper for registration, Peter Larsen for website support, and Cinda Peters for graphic design work. And the biggest thanks of all goes to event organizer Jana Steffen, whose hard work and sheer tenacity monitoring all the details ensured that this event was fiscally sound, smoothly run, and a valuable learning opportunity for all participants. Bravo!

As our name suggests, Equestrians' Institute exists to provide educational and competitive opportunities for horse enthusiasts, to sustain a network supporting camaraderie and skill development. Learning comes in all forms; attend an E.I. event and you will soak up the lessons experientially, tangibly, and in the moment. (Check our online calendar on website to view upcoming events!) Learning comes from social networking as well. E.I. members provide, and have access to, a deep pool of knowledge and expertise. To further honor our ongoing mission, we invite you to contribute articles, columns, general advice, instructional stories, and other interesting tidbits to keep the learning process vibrant and vigorous. Learning is a group effort, so all entries will be graciously received. If you have something to contribute, let's see it! We extend a special invitation to trainers, barn owners, veterinarians, farriers, and other equine professionals to send articles -- promote yourself by promoting education. Oh, and if you haven't joined E.I. this year, go to our website, print out the membership form, and just do it. Thank you.

June 2009

One of my favorite sayings is "*Look for the best, prepare for the worst, and take what comes.*" The unknown author has favored us with a pithy nugget of wisdom that resonates with matters big or small. What I like about this saying is the triple-whammy structure: the initial nod to optimistic striving and dreaming big -- the cautionary middle tempering the early hot impulse and grounding the dream in reality-- and finally the brave calm acceptance that the journey may not be what we expect. I like the compact power and utility of this saying.

Equestrians' Institute strives to "look for the best" in organizing and managing educational and competitive events for the local equestrian community. We have already met one of our 2009 strategic goals -- to dramatically increase volunteer participation to help staff and run our many offered events. Volunteers benefit from free education, social networking, and the sheer fun of it. I am happy to report that our April Volunteer Drive netted a surge in volunteer signups for our recognized dressage shows. Thank you everyone who participated in the online Volunteer Drive and congratulations to the lucky 10 random-drawing winners who received saddle pads or gift certificates. Keep an eye on our website and watch the calendar for future opportunities. We particularly need many volunteers for the Horse Trials, September 19-20.

We also need to "prepare for the worst" in our event planning. How will we handle public-health threats like pandemic flu, or extreme weather, or terrorist alerts, or other unforeseen events that might cancel or delay E.I. events? To make sure we have thoughtfully considered not only the customary but also the unusual scenarios that might affect our gatherings, we formed a small working group to generate a "preparedness plan." Starting with the framework provided by USEF, USDF, and USEA rules, we will generate a robust, sensible and equitable plan to address and prepare for situations that might affect our ability to conduct business as usual. Our goal of course is to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of all our participants -- equine and human.

And now exhale, release a great gust of air generated by all the hope and excitement and worry and frenzied planning. The show season is in full swing -- it's Go Time! Now is the time to "take what comes," and just enjoy the moments as they unfold. Happy Riding, and see you at the shows!

July 2009

I confess I wilt in hot weather. As a native of the Pacific Northwest, I always grumble and moan and reluctantly smear sunscreen on pasty white skin when the sun pushes the thermostat above 75 degrees. I was sweating and griping one such "hot" day to a friend who splits her time between LA and Seattle, and she just shook her sun-streaked head at me. Her expression was one of mild rebuke. "But you are missing your chance. When else can you air out your musty basement?" To that I had no good response. The kids' rec room does smell a little funky.

Recognizing opportunities in unfamiliar guises is a valuable skill that with a little practice becomes a happy habit. Breaking out of familiar patterns and preferences takes some mental flexibility but the rewards are worth it. I invite you to explore what Equestrians' Institute has to offer you this year, and to give you a chance to practice your new habit of identifying golden opportunities in unlikely places. I challenge you to find something you haven't done before and give it a try. Pick an event outside your discipline and go watch. Volunteer for a task you think you would absolutely loathe, and find something good and valuable in the experience. Contact E.I. for help and more ideas, and peruse the events calendar listed below and on the website.

I want to usher out the stale air in other ways too. It is harder for organizations to be flexible and exploratory, but it is always good to guard against mustiness. I encourage you to email me directly with your questions, comments, complaints, issues, and concerns about Equestrians' Institute. Tell me what works for you and what doesn't. I want your honest feedback so I can do a little organizational housecleaning and shine the sun into the dark corners. Equestrians' Institute exists to serve the members, so don't be shy! If you aren't a member, tell me why. Thank you for your input.

Flying Changes - President's Reports 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 by Rebecca H. Chatfield, Ph.D.

August 2009

Riders everywhere know that understanding body mechanics improves performance. This month there is a splendid educational opportunity to learn key concepts of bio-mechanics and classical training from Dr. Gerhard Heuschmann, DVM, Bereiter, and author of Tug of War: Classical vs. Modern Dressage (Trafalgar Square Books, 2007). Plan to attend this informative lecture on Thursday, August 20th, from 5:00-9:00pm in Redmond WA at the Redmond Inn, conveniently located near the end of Hwy 520. This is the first time this lecture has been offered in the greater Seattle area and is co-sponsored by Equestrians' Institute and Wacky Nut Farm. Pre-registration is required with discounts given to E.I. members (\$75 lecture only). On August 21-23rd Dr. Heuschmann will also be offering a 3-day clinic at Wacky Nut Farm on Bainbridge Island. Auditing at the clinic is available as well. Please check the E.I. website for more details on the lecture and the clinic.

Once in a while our hardy volunteers need some love for the countless hours donated to Equestrians' Institute. Please join me in applauding the efforts of the amazing crew on our Dressage Show Committee. The show season has once again been hugely successful due to stalwart E.I. members who toil, unseen and mostly unappreciated, for many hours before, during, and after each show. A special thank you to Lothar Pinkars (Show Organizer & TD), Shelly Navarre (Dressage Director), Kellie Larsen (Schooling Shows), Colleen Jones (Volunteers), and Susan Pittman (Show Organizer). Without the sustained effort of this core group and all of their loyal helpers we would not be able to put on the L'Aperitif, Chablis, Beaujolais, and Champagne Classic recognized dressage shows or the four dressage schooling shows each year. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

It's not too early to begin planning for the big E.I. social event of the season -- the annual fundraising auction. This year we have a fresh take on an old favorite, with more emphasis on fun. After moving the date from springtime to Saturday October 17th we are excited to announce our auction will also be a costume party. This is the major fundraiser for Equestrians' Institute each year, and as a nonprofit organization we rely on your generosity to make it successful. Use your imagination!

September 2009

Summer is winding down and fall is just around the corner. Equestrians' Institute is delighted to host the annual Eventing E.I. Horse Trials at Donida Farm September 19-20. Beginner Novice, Novice, Training, and Preliminary levels are offered. Donida Farm is a terrific venue to watch the Horse Trials because it is spectator-friendly and thoughtfully laid out. For more information on E.I. Horse Trials click on the Calendar/Omnibus on www.useventing.com or contact.

E.I.'s final dressage schooling show of the 2009 season will be Sunday September 20th at San Sebastian Equestrian Center in Redmond. Check the website as usual for sign-up information and forms. Entries are due Saturday September 12th.

Looking ahead to October should bring a tingly feeling to your spine. Halloween is just around the corner and so is the E.I. 2009 Fundraising Auction with this year's theme "Phantom of the Opera". Set aside the evening of Saturday October 17th from 6-10pm at Redhook Brewery to visit with friends, eat a delicious dinner, and bid on interesting items in support of Equestrians' Institute. Don't forget to wear your spooky, funny, or interesting costume; prizes awarded for costume creativity and bravery. Do you have a special item to contribute to the bidding frenzy? Donations of auction items can be directed to Wendy Meyers before October 1st. Buy your auction tickets online on the E.I. website. Individual tickets are \$30 each. Buy a table of 8 for a group of friends and get one ticket free! Can't wait to see you there!

October 2009

What could be better than an evening of festive frivolity that also supports a good cause? Put on your best Halloween costume and join us Saturday October 17th for E.I.'s Annual Fundraising Auction at Redhook Brewery. To set a spooky tone, our theme is Phantom of the Opera. Come prepared to socialize, dine, laugh, and spend some coin on an array of interesting, useful, and quirky items. Costume contest prizes awarded for creativity and bravery! Tickets are on sale on E.I.'s website for \$30 each. Buy a table of 8 for a group of friends and get one ticket free. For more auction information contact Wendy Meyers.

Ever want to dance with your horse? Here's your chance to learn more about musical freestyles, an increasingly popular event at dressage shows. Acclaimed freestyle designer Karen Robinson helps each horse and rider craft a beautiful partnership through careful musical selection and choreography. Equestrians' Institute is delighted to announce that the next Karen Robinson clinic is October 10-11 at Pacific Moon Equestrian Center in Arlington, 9 am to 6 pm each day. For more information on Karen see her website www.applaudedressage.com or the Pacific Moon website www.pacific-moon.net. Auditors are welcome.

Want to learn more about getting involved with E.I. Come join us!

November 2009

November is a particularly good month to reflect on gratitude. Too often we slide into the tendency to magnify minor annoyances, to obsess about doubts or fear, and to nitpick the errors and flaws of our experiences. Are you too distracted to be grateful? Too busy? Too judgmental -- perhaps invested in the thrill and power of critique of others' well-intentioned efforts? Now is the time to take stock of your habits, and to cultivate a pattern where you give thanks for good and positive elements around you. Personally, I am grateful for family, good health, and the capacity to enjoy the company of human and equine friends while pursuing a sport and hobby I love. I am also grateful to be involved with an amazing group of dedicated people who work very hard to help me and others continue to enjoy equestrian pursuits. Thank you, Equestrians' Institute!

Show your continued support of E.I. by renewing for the new membership year, which starts December 1st. Renew by November 15th to be eligible to win one of 10 free saddle pads with the E.I. logo. Membership renewal forms will be sent to current members; you can also check the website for renewal information. Renew or join, you'll be glad you did.

December 2009

We wrap up another successful year for E.I. and it's time to thank the folks who make it all happen. Thank you to our key Directors and stalwart Board members who wear many different hats during the year: Shelly Navarre, Peter Larsen, Colleen Jones, Gunn Cooper, Chriss Cardwell, Penny Leggott, Tracy Garland, Barb Penniston, Maren Jensen, Kathleen Butler, Lezlie Wolff, Matt Eagan, and Polly Kranick. Thanks also to Lothar Pinkers, Kellie Larsen, and Susan Pittman for running E.I.'s various dressage shows, and to Gwen Blake and Lisa Copeland for providing such fantastic show venues for us. Thanks to Beth Glostén for handling grants and running scribing clinics, to Jan Loesche for taking wonderful pictures, and to Cinda Peters for graphics design help. Thanks to Wendy Meyers, Susan Napier, and Carolyn Adams for making this year's auction a fun success. Thank you Karen Moore for our fantastic Musical Freestyle clinics. A special thanks to Carolynn Bunch for being our GMO rep to the USDF convention. Thanks also to Linda Mackin, Peter Rothschild, Jeff Roberts, Kate Causbie, and all those volunteers who jump right in and do what's needed. Phew! There are a lot more people to thank but I'm running out of space! At our annual meeting on January 9th we will have another chance to honor volunteers and to award some well-deserved prizes. Watch your mail for a postcard with more information, and your email for electronic news updates.

Membership renewals are happening now. Renew now and you're good until Nov 30th 2010!
Happy Holidays from Equestrians' Institute!