



CLINICIAN/SESSION LEADERS

JESSICA BALLENGER

Jessica is a gold medalist vaulter and competed nationally and internationally for 15 years. She has been a member of numerous National Championship A teams, as well as being a member of the team that won the bronze medal at the World Equestrian Games in Rome, Italy in 1998. Jessica had the opportunity to be trained by many of our nation's top coaches including Emma Garrod Seely, Isabelle Bibbler Parker, Nancy Stevens Brown and Patti Skipton. Jessica believes that working with these mentors has improved her ability to coach at all levels, from tiny tots to A teams. Jessica has been coaching team and individuals for more than ten years. She currently coaches Mt. Eden's A Team. She is currently on the board of the AVA.

MEGAN BENJAMIN

Megan is the only US woman to win gold at a World Vaulting Championships, bringing home the title at the World Equestrian Games Vaulting World Championships in 2006 in Aachen, Germany. At the same games she won a silver medal as part of Team USA. In the spring of 2008 she briefly came out of retirement to compete with Team USA at the World Vaulting Championships in Brno, Czech Republic, winning a bronze medal on her horse Leonardo, who also carried her individually in 2006. Megan currently coaches Mt. Eden's B team, and she's a frequent and popular clinician throughout the US, Canada, Australia and South America.

SHERI BENJAMIN

Sheri is the current president of the AVA, and has also served the AVA as vice president of membership, vice president of development, and as a board member. At the USEF level, she is a member of the USEF Board of Directors and a member of the USEF Vaulting Discipline Committee. She is on the USET's Advisory Board as well. At the Mt. Eden Vaulting Club she served as president for many years, as well as treasurer. Her goal is to position vaulting as the gateway to all equestrian sport, convincing equestrian programs nationwide that it's doable and good business to add vaulting to their current program lists. She writes the Vaultopia blog to share her never-say-die attitude and unbridled optimism with the entire vaulting community. Sheri can muck a stall in five minutes or less and is most proud to be a vaulting mom!

LINDA BIBBLER

Linda has been involved with horses all her life and with vaulting for over 30 years. She has been an enthusiastic parent, horse owner, AVA supporter, AVA and USEF Committee and Board member and USEF Competition Manager/Licensee. As V.P. Competitions she has reached out to all regions and clubs to encourage more, safer, and better competitions.. In 2009 Linda was awarded the AVA's Volunteer of the Year award for her tireless and continued work for the AVA.

CAROLYN BLAND

Carolyn Bland earned a gold medal at the 2010 Alltech World Equestrian Games with equine partner Palatine and the F.A.C.E. (Free Artists Creative Equestrians) Vaulters. She studied at the Fulmer School of Equitation with dressage instructors Robert Hall and Liz Brown, who greatly influenced her philosophy on riding. Her focus on biomechanics and positive reinforcement allows for great success both in and out of the show arena. Carolyn has consistently found success in the dressage world throughout the years, where her clientele consisted of mostly adult amateur riders competing Second Level through Prix St. Georges. Carolyn's training philosophy starts with getting a horse and rider working in harmony, which can be a slower process, starting on the lunge line with the rider attaining independent balance. Since her discovery of vaulting Carolyn has been the sole horse trainer and lunge responsible for the success of the FACE Team and vaulters. She is currently training and lungeing for Pacific Coast Vaulting Club and doing lungeing clinics across the nation. Carolyn was the first recipient of the American Vaulting Association's Trainer of the Year award for her invaluable assistance in the success of the F.A.M.E. (Free Artists Mt. Eden) Vaulters at the 2006 Aachen World Equestrian Games.

ELIZABETH BRIGHAM

Elizabeth took up vaulting at the age of 9 when she joined Great Falls Vaulters and has been hooked ever since! In addition to coaching vaulting at Great Falls, she competes at the Gold level in vaulting and has represented the United States at international vaulting competitions around the world. Elizabeth loves working with vaulters of all ages, teaching not only vaulting skills, but also helping students develop teamwork skills, focus, and confidence - all while making vaulting lots of fun!

CRAIG COBURN

Craig Coburn is currently an AVA "R", USEF "R" and FEI "I" Vaulting Judge, in addition to being the AVA's National Office Manager. He discovered the sport in 1972 at the age of nine, vaulting with Hidden Hills Horseman Vaulters in Southern California. In 1986, Craig won his first of three consecutive Gold Men's National Championships, coached by Nancy Stevens-Brown. Craig competed in a number of international competitions over the years including several European Championships and the FEI World Vaulting Championships in 1986 & 1988.

Craig has been a member of the AVA Board of Directors for many years and has been a member of the USEF Vaulting Technical Committee since its inception in 1986. Craig is also a member of the USEF Vaulting High Performance Vaulting Committee.

Craig joined the AVA judges apprentice program in 1993 and since then has had the honor of judging 13 AVA/USEF National Championships. Craig has judged numerous FEI events from Brazil to Austria to Canada. He was the USEF Chef d' Equipe at CVIO Aachen, Germany, in 2010 & 2011 and was the USEF Chef d' Equipe at the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Lexington, USA, where USA won the Team Gold Medal. He is scheduled to judge four CVIs and the FEI Vaulting World Championships in 2012.

CAROLYN CONNER

Carolyn Conner, AVA VP of Education, has been involved with horses her whole life. She competed in hunter-jumper and western events as a junior rider in Marin County, California. In college she competed on the University of Colorado Boulder English and Western intercollegiate show teams and then became the western instructor for the University physical education program. In 1978 Carolyn was introduced to vaulting and incorporated it into her hunter-jumper riding program at Cottonwood Stables in Boulder, Colorado. After returning to the San Francisco Bay Area in the early 1990's, Carolyn's son Eric Garcia joined Tambourine Vaulters as a four year old tiny tot and it was not long afterwards that Carolyn herself began competing in her forties. (Back then they always needed that eighth vaulter for teams!) A 'late in life' Bronze medalist, Carolyn started Morning Star Vaulters in

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1998 and Willow Tree Vaulters in 2008, both in her home town of Novato, California. Carolyn believes that vaulting is the best and safest way for ANYONE to be introduced to horses and that vaulting is more fun than all the other equestrian disciplines combined.

SUZANNE DETOL

Suzanne Detol is a former vaulter and has founded several vaulting clubs — two in the 1980s and more recently two in Oregon, DevonWood Vaulting Club and Brookwood Vaulters. She has been a mentor to vaulters, coaches, lungers and judges for the past 30 years. In 2008 Sue was awarded the AVA's most prestigious honor: the Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1998 she was named AVA Mentor of the Year.

Suzanne has worn many hats in the AVA—she is a current member of the board of directors and is the organization's Technical Advisor. She has served as general secretary, executive VP, Region II supervisor, Region III supervisor, AVA competition secretary, medal test secretary and technical committee chair.

An AVA judge since 1990, she became an FEI O judge in 2001, and is well respected in the international judging arena. She has judged dozens of CVI's throughout the world, as well as the Canadian Provincials and British National Championships. She has served as the US chef d'équip for three World Championships, including the WEG in Aachen, Germany, 2006. She was a vaulting judge at the 2002 World Equestrian Games, the World Championships in Brno, Czech Republic in 2008 and was appointed Chief Judge for the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Kentucky, USA.

KELLEY HOLLY

As a professional educator and administrator of a large grant funded program Kelley has brought her expertise to many facets of the AVA from national championship fest manager to technical committee chair to several VP and committee positions (including Constitution and By Laws, Technical, Competitions, Development, Insurance) over the past 28 years. As the President of Region II and one of the key organizers of the Region II championships she has managed a multiple-day competition and made sure that all levels of competitors needs were met. She is also extremely active in helping beginning groups and recreational programs obtain the needed resources for their programs. Her work with the Technical Committee helping to organize more open Judges training sessions to be held through out the country

JODI RINARD

Jodi has 10 years of experience in public accounting with significant experience in non-profit accounting and auditing. She has been the AVA treasurer the last three years and was the Region IV Regional Supervisor prior to that. Her recent projects as AVA treasurer include installing accounting in Quickbooks, revising the financial statement and budgeting process, and revising the non-profit subordinate procedures. A former vaulter herself, she has been a member of the AVA for 24 years, and is founder and head coach of the Mile High Vaulters.

MARIANNE ROSE

Marianne has over 20 years of experience in all phases vaulting (everything except actually doing it!) from parent to AVA officer, from horse trainer to coach, to competition manager of every type of vaulting competition. She has been an AVA Board member for over 15 years and held the offices of V.P. Promotion/Publicity and V.P. Competitions. As a professional graphic designer, she upgraded Vaulting World Magazine in quality and content. She has managed many international, national, and local competitions. Currently she is on the USEF Competitions Committee, Region II Supervisor, Communications Director for Region II, VP of Mt. Eden Vaulting Club and manager of several major competitions.

KARIN SCHMIDT

Karin was born and raised in Germany, has been riding since the age of seven, and is a nationally certified vaulting instructor. Her German certifications include specialties in jumping, dressage and racing. Karin is certified through the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (now called PATH International) and has served on the board of the American Vaulting Association. She is a member of the American Association of Riding Schools and offers both the AARS Senior and Junior Rider Programs at her bar.

EMMA GARROD SEELY

Emma Garrod Seely, an AVA Mentor of the Year award recipient, has led her vaulters to dozens of national team and individual championships, in addition to winning the National Gold Freestyle Championship herself when she was 18. She coached Kerith Lemon, Devon Maitozo and Megan Benjamin to multiple medals at various World Vaulting Championships, and is well known and respected in the international vaulting community, currently chairing the FEI Vaulting Committee. Emma's horses have won many AVA Horse of the Year and Osierlea awards. She is an AVA judge, has served on the AVA Board and provides consistent, stable leadership to the Mt. Eden Vaulting Club as head coach and lunger.

PETE SENN

For 19 years, Pete worked in the engineering field for a major commercial manufacturer overseeing many projects large and small. An AVA member for the past 6 years, he is currently the coach of Root Farm Vaulters (approximately 50 adaptive vaulters per week along with a demonstration/competitive team.) He is the chair for the AVA Adaptive Vaulting Committee which includes Para/Recreational/Special Needs vaulters, has led several clinics on both coasts and is always promoting the benefits of vaulting for everyone.

PATTI SKIPTON

The 2009 AVA Trainer of the Year and 2010 AVA Mentor of the Year, Patti Skipton is an icon in the vaulting community. She founded two highly successful vaulting programs: the Monte Vista Vaulters (from 1986 to 1999), and now the Warm Beach Vaulters in Washington, where she has grown the vaulting program from five to 30 competitive vaulters in just five short years. A member of the AVA since the 1970s and a longtime member of the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA), Patti was instrumental in helping to integrate vaulting within the recognized CHA programs; the group now offers multiple levels of vaulting certification, and has been key in spreading the popularity of vaulting among riders and horse enthusiasts nationwide. Patti is a Certified Vaulting Clinic Instructor with the CHA.

SAMANTHA SMITH-MATSON

Samantha has been vaulting competitively for twenty years. She has competed at the World Equestrian Games in 2002 and the World Championships in 2004. She has competed internationally as an individual and on teams. Most recently she competed on the Woodside A team that represented the USA at CHIO Aachen in 2010 and 2011. Samantha has coached at many of the USEF high performance camps as well as many other clinics all over North America. As a Wooside Vaulters coach since 2009, her 1* team was Champion at CVI Kentucky in 2009 and she coached the 2010 AVA/ USEF National Champion B team, the 2011 AVA/USEF National Champion A team, the 2011 Men's Gold National Champion, Women's Gold Reserve National Champion and the Women's Silver National Champion. Samantha is currently coaching and vaulting on the Woodside A team, which is preparing for the 2012 season.

PATRICK STEVENS

Patrick has been vaulting since he was three years old and is now the lower level coach for his home team, Woodside Vaulters. He has won many regional championships through the years and in 2007, Patrick was the USEF/AVA National Silver Men's Champion and this year Patrick is the 2011 USEF/AVA National Gold Men's Champion.

After his win at Nationals last summer, he traveled to Michigan to clinic for two weeks then went on to Australia where he competed at the CVI Sydney and took top honors in the men's division.

JAN WEBER

A long-time vaulting evangelist and the AVA's President's Award winner last year for her incredible work at the 2010 World Equestrian Games (among other things), Jan Weber is the AVA's Vice President of Development, charged with helping to grow vaulting throughout the United States. She and her husband Bob (also an AVA board member) split their time between the Greater Boston Area and a beautiful horse farm outside of Lexington, KY.

BETH WHILLOCK

Beth has been a vaulting coach for 5 years. She has been working hard in Region X to develop vaulting in areas that have not had vaulting clubs before. She feels that the AVA needs to develop better working relationships with other youth equestrian groups, such as Pony Club and CHA. She led the effort to incorporate vaulting back into Pony Club. Her team is also working with CHA to strengthen relationship with AVA. Beth is currently the AVA Regional Supervisor and President for Region X.