

My name is Kacie Linegar, and I am the incredibly lucky 2017 recipient of the Joe Bushager Memorial Grant. I feel so blessed to be given this opportunity to expand my dressage training via this grant, and wanted to provide an update regarding my year thus far.

First, if you are wondering - who the heck is Kacie Linegar?? - you're likely not alone. While I consider myself a dressage enthusiast, active rider in Houston, and Olympic hopeful (okay, kidding on this one), you probably haven't met me. Why? Like many of you, as an Adult Amateur, I wear many hats; I am a mother to 3 kiddos (5 year old daughter, 3 year old identical twin daughters), I am a full time consultant to Chevron and other clients, and I also like to think of myself as a devoted wife (note that my devotion exponentially increases with my husband's silent acceptance of this sport's ever-increasing expenses....but I digress).

So instead of attending most shows, clinics, and other networking opportunities, I maintain a nocturnal approach and hit the saddle - instead of the pillow - around 9pm in the evenings. Who needs sleep anyway? Even then, I struggle to keep my training going along with everything else. My gorgeous partner-in-crime, Sander, a Friesian Sporthorse who I also am convinced is a unicorn, is incredibly talented and forgiving, although I have caught him giving me the side eye when I roll in long after night checks and expect to work on our third level movements....I understand his angst completely, and agree it is hard to learn and practice flying changes in a dimly lit field!

I struggle to find a trainer that I can fit into this crazy schedule, and my consistency is haphazard at best. Plus, like many (or all) of you, budget limitations also throw a curve ball into my Olympic dreams.

I mention all of this because I know I am not alone - and I have figured out a not-so-perfect solution that may also help you as well. With a little bit of creativity, OODLES of patience, and funding from the Joe Bushager Memorial Grant, I have recurring 9pm lessons with Nevada-based Grand Prix trainer, Seana Adamson. How? Virtually. Live....in real-time! I also use this approach at shows to help me in warmup/practice my test, since I rarely have a trainer accompany me to shows - and I have seen upwards of 10% point differences in my tests as a result! Let me teach you my ways, grasshoppers:

Equipment Needed: Smartphone and another cellular or wireless device (if facility has wireless), Bluetooth headset with microphone, and sport phone holder (or place to stash your phone in your saddle pad, etc).

Step 1: Find a poor soul to hold cellular/wireless device - e.g., iPad - in my case, I bribe a neighbor kid to tag along. (Expert tip: Make sure poor soul has bug spray and, if you're really feeling generous, . . . water.)

Step 2: Both rider and trainer need to have accounts with facetime, Skype, or other live video chat service. I use Skype and it is free - call trainer using this chat service on the iPad/tablet. This serves as your video camera. (Expert tip: You'll likely have to mute this video chat, as the trainer will get feedback listening to you over your phone and the tablet) (Another Expert tip: Trainer may find it easier to use computer, as size of screen is bigger and this opens the trainer's phone for the actual phone call - see step 3)

Step 3: Once video feed is established, call trainer using your Smartphone with your wireless Bluetooth headphones. Then attach phone to horse/rider via armband or fanny pack etc.

Step 4: Trainer is now watching you via the tablet, and you are both communicating via the phone connection. Voila! Live lesson!

Expect to have to troubleshoot sometimes, and I have had to cancel the lesson mid-ride because of poor wireless or cellular connection, the weather, the lighting, etc. BUT, these live steam lessons give me the opportunity to work with a top-notch trainer on my schedule at my small facility - something that was not possible before.

In a few more months, I will provide an overview of what I have worked on, the progress made, and all of the juicy dressage updates. In the meantime, if your life has a similar amount of chaos and you connected with my nutty schedule, I am here to tell you to KEEP GOING - and get creative. Also, surround yourself with an amazing support system - including HDS, family, babysitters, wine - to help you along the way. It may not be exactly how you envisioned reaching your personal goals, but it gets you in the saddle; which is exactly where we all want to be.