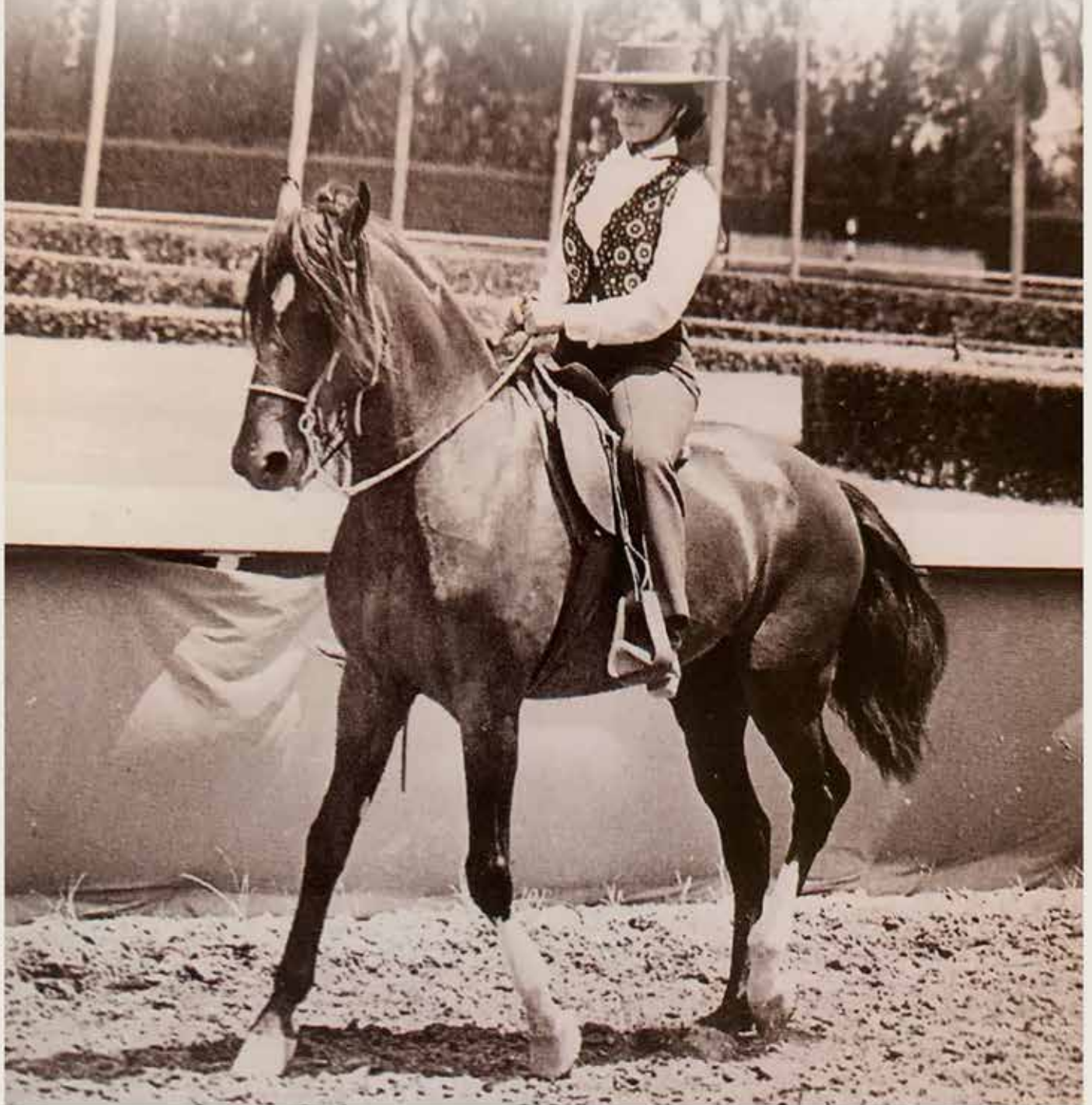


HORSE WORLD

Paso Fino

Vol. 1 of 4, 2024

The Official Publication of the Paso Fino Horse Association



: EL PASTOR-PFHA FOUNDATION SIRE AND HALL OF FAME HORSE (CIRCA 1968)
AND HENRIETTA RATLIFF PFHA HALL OF FAME MEMBER.



**THE PASO FINO HORSE ASSOCIATION
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FROM THE TREASURER

It is a privilege to serve as the PFHA Treasurer. Over the of years, I have served on our Board of Directors in a number of capacities.



In that time, I have learned that a Board that is able to be a cohesive unit is a great thing for PFHA. Right now, at this point in our history, we are enjoying the results of a very productive, hard working Board of Directors.

Under the guidance and leadership of our President, Jeanne Griggs, the Board of Directors – comprised of Regional delegates, Officers, and Executive Committee directors – is meeting more frequently and providing critical information to our membership in a timely manner. Members are becoming more engaged and active. Our PFHA Executive Director and staff are involved in our decisions which, in turn, helps us to implement the initiatives passed at our meetings.

Within our structure, the Delegates are responsive to their Regions. Fortunately, this Board is able to recognize and respect each others' similarities along with their differences. What works in Florida may not work in Minnesota. But as a "National" organization, this Board understands that both geographical areas need to succeed for us to be a sustainable organization.

Our Officers and Executive Committee members represent the Piedmont Region, Mason Dixon Region, North Florida Region, Ocala Region, Ozark Empire Region, High Plains

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UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS

SHOW	REGION	DATE	LOCATION
Asheville Alive	Piedmont	June 14-16, 2024	Western NC Ag Center
Miami Summer Paso Fino Show	Florida	June 21-23, 2024	Ronald Reagan Equestrian Center
Rose Hill Ranch THT	hosted by Rose Hill Ranch	June 22-23, 2024	Coldspring, TX
Bluegrass Triple Crown	Ozark Empire, KY, Great Lakes	June 28-30, 2024	Kentucky Horse Park
Great Western's THT	Great Western	July 13-14, 2024	Pocatemo, ID
Summer Spectacular Show	Georgia and North Florida	July 26-27, 2024	Bulloch County AG Complex
Last Chance Show	Florida	August 2-4, 2024	Ronald Reagan Equestrian Center
Deep South Summer Sizzler	Deep South	August 9-10, 2024	Lagniappe Equestrian Center
Southeast Summer Championship	hosted by Milda Minter	August 17-18, 2024	Great Smokey Mountain Expo
Mason Dixon Last Chance	Mason Dixon	August 30-31, 2024	Dream Park
Mid America's THT	Mid America	August 31-September 1, 2024	Rochester, MN
2024 Grand National Show		September 25-29, 2024	World Equestrian Center
Piedmont Fall Fiesta	Piedmont	November 2-23, 2024	South Carolina Equine Park

2023 PFHA

TOP TEN

*Pasos for
pleasure
riders*

WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE WITH YOU STORIES FROM OUR 2023 TOP TEN PASOS FOR PLEASURE RIDERS. COMBINED, THEY LOGGED OVER 3,000 HOURS IN THE SADDLE LAST YEAR - A REMARKABLE FEAT! WE HOPE THEIR MEMORIES INSPIRE YOU TO GET OUT AND RIDE YOUR PASOS! FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PASOS FOR PLEASURE PROGRAM, VISIT THE PFHA WEBSITE.



2023 TOP TEN PASOS FOR PLEASURE RIDERS

MEMBER ID	MEMBER NAME	HOURS
43442	Brianael Cianelli	607.50
52308	Ryan Richards	490.75
30607	Annalee Fjellberg	322.00
32061	Jennifer Sharp	317.75
24376	Andrea J. Lord	293.00
28149	Cathy Barnes	272.00
27455	Francine Naasko	257.75
33589	Wendy Metzler	252.50
32022	Megan Altavilla	168.50
28548	Carole Graves-Stagg	163.50

*Pasos for
pleasure*

Pasos for Pleasure HOOKED FOREVER

BRIAVEL CIANELLI: 607.5 HOURS

Since I have only small acreage and live on a retirement salary, I cannot afford a well-trained, easy riding Paso Fino. All my life, I have had to make-do with other people's mistakes and cast-offs, or buy young colts and train them myself.

I had admired Paso Finos for years, but could not afford one until we moved to Florida, and many were available. My daughter was turning three and ready for a pony of her own. I found a sweet 10-year-old Paso languishing on a used car parking lot, for a price I could afford. Only problem was, he reared instead of riding along nicely. I figured I could get him out of that since neither his saddle nor his bridle fit him. In no time at all, he had earned the nickname "World's Greatest Pony" and I was hooked forever on Paso Finos.

I loved their fire and brilliance, their gentle kindness, their easy gaits, and everything about them. When my old Appaloosa mare died, my husband urged me to buy a well-bred horse, something super special. But horses like that run around \$10,000 or more, far more than my budget. I searched the Internet until I found a yearling colt who could not be registered because his sire had disappeared before the proper registration papers could be signed.

He was listed as temperament '7' in his ad, and I wondered even then if I could train a temperament '7' colt at my age, 56. I had worked with Thoroughbred racing colts and knew how obstreperous stud colts could be. This colt was indeed super well-bred, the grandson of the famous Hilachas, who had sired so many quality colts that he remained in the top ten sires for ten years. He couldn't be registered, but I could afford him, and he was mine. When he came off the trailer at my place, I couldn't believe how stunning and beautiful he was—the horse of my dreams.

He was certainly a challenge to train and start, but no more difficult than those stud colts at the track, so we persevered. I wanted a super special, noble, name for such a gorgeous animal. I named him Chorro Oscuro, "dark jet" in English. I thought it sounded perfect . . . until I learned that in Mexico, 'chorro' means 'fart'. I guess

that fit him as well, for he was truly a handful and a half. Gelding him took a lot of the silliness out but none of the fire. He was a spooker—and still is. I have measured some of his sideways leaps at eight feet. He can jump, spin, and bolt in a split second with no warning. I came off of him more than a few times as I was training him. But I couldn't have asked for a better horse. He owns my heart and I would die before I would ever sell him. He'll be 20 in April, still spooks, but a dream gait, a puppy dog personality, and a pure delight to ride.

After our World's Greatest Pony and Chorro, I was hooked forever on Paso Finos. When my neighbor showed up with a four-year-old Paso mare in his trailer, I was intrigued. He got her cheap because she had a LOT of problems. It turned out more problems than my neighbor wanted to fool with, but I'd been dealing with problem horses all my life, so I thought, "How hard can it be?" She already had a name, Isabel Memorable Paradise. She is the granddaughter of Marcapasos and had the gait to prove it. No matter what you did on her back, she cortoad along, never altering her speed or rhythm. She was something else, and I adored her. My neighbor quickly decided she had far more quirks than he wanted to fool with, and sold her to me.

The last thing I needed was another horse, but she was a dream to ride, and I figured I could work through her issues. I never owned a horse so difficult to train. When she didn't want to do something, she would rear and come over on her rider. When I put her in a trailer, she would kick repeatedly and cut herself all to pieces. She wouldn't ride solo, ever. She was the most opinionated mare I had ever seen – and the most delightful to ride.

I nearly gave up before I got her trained. I discovered that everything had to be accomplished in the most baby of steps, far smaller increments than any horse I had ever trained. For example, I loaded her and fed her in my trailer every single day for six years. Just when I would think I had cured her of kicking in the trailer, something would happen, and we'd have to start all over again.

We discovered to solve her rearing problem, we simply had to put a halter on under her bridle, and when she'd start rearing, I'd toss the lead rope to my riding buddy, and he/she would pony her for about fifteen minutes. It worked

a treat and we did that for a good two years.

To train her to ride solo, I'd ride out with a friend, and split up about an hour into the ride. She was willing enough to ride home by herself, so that was the start. Then I started asking her to lead rides, which she would do – if she was in the mood – for about ten minutes. Then eleven minutes, then fifteen minutes. One day we came upon a split in the trail which neither way led home. She took that first step away from home, leading the ride, and from then on, we increased the time and the experiences.

All of these lessons (and there were many more which I am not describing) took about six years of training. But it was so worth it. I discovered that a lot of her quirksiness revolved around her attitude that she knew what she was doing and she did not want anyone to interfere or tell her what to do. When I put inexperienced, timid beginners on her, she reveled in taking care of them. The more frightened and tense they were, the better she liked it, and the better she took care of them. "Don't worry," she says, "I've got this. I know what I'm doing."

She is totally amazing, delightful, and wonderful, and I wouldn't sell her for any amount of money.

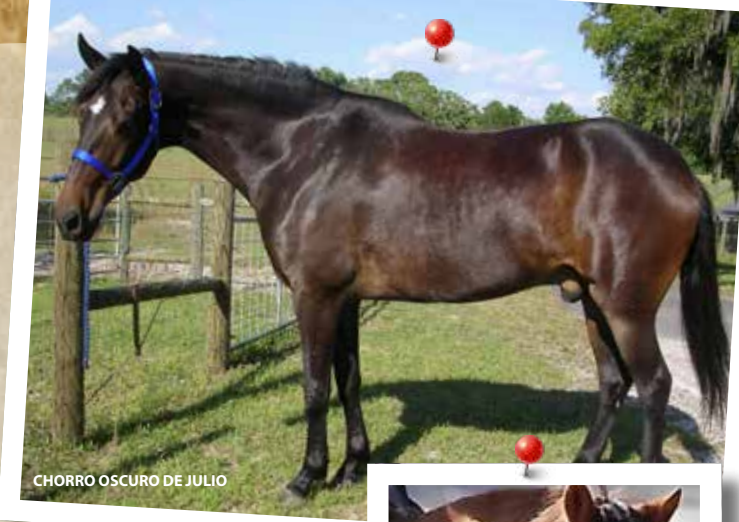
So, I had three Pasos, and had no need for any more. But my neighbor loves to buy and sell horses, and he loves Pasos, so I was a goner when he brought home the cutest little Paso you could ever imagine. I named him Acicate de Guytero. Acicate means "spur" in Spanish, and I thought that fit him perfectly, plus it sounds great and is fun to say.

Cute indeed he was, but he was not cute to ride. He had a habit of rearing up high and landing in a big buck, then rearing again, then bucking. When a horse rears (and he would go high), you throw your weight forward and keep those reins loose. But when he landed, with loose reins and weight forward, those bucks were hard to sit. My neighbor soon decided he'd had enough of that mess, and the cute lil' thing was mine.

Although I rode him and managed the rearing and bucking, instead of getting better, he continued to get more and more difficult to ride. I called my friend Erica, the consummate horse trainer, to see if she would help me. She said I was a good enough rider and trainer, and I didn't need her help; she was sure I could manage him. She said, "Just spin him when he starts rearing."

I said, "I do spin him. But when I stop, he immediately goes back up into a rear."

She said, "You have to spin him for fifty minutes."



CHORRO OSCURO DE JULIO



ACICATE DE GUYTERO

Fifty minutes!! You have got to be kidding! Who can spin a horse for fifty minutes! She said that's what you have to do.

Well, that lil' guy was worth it, so I figured all I could do was try.

I rode Aci in my yard, spinning him about twelve times until I could at least get him to go out the gate. When I had him leaving the yard without rearing, I figured it was time for the BIG TRIAL. My neighbor rode with me. We hadn't gone fifty yards when he went up in a high rear and landed in a buck, and we started spinning. It wasn't like me sitting up there with a light rein, deftly turning him round and round. He was furious, plunging and biting my foot and fighting me with everything he had. My neighbor timed it and said it was 12 ½ minutes. He gave up and we rode out the trail. The next day, it was only about five minutes, the next day three minutes, and soon, he was riding like a dream.

It took only about a month to get him riding beautifully, as opposed to Isabel's six years. And oh! He was a horse in a million, with a great forward movement, beautiful smooth corto, lovely canter, and so fun to ride! Of my three Pasos, he is the best one to ride, though I will never love a horse more than I love my Chorro.

To complete this story, we have to remember that Pasos for Pleasure requires registered Pasos. Chorro couldn't be registered, but thanks to the wonderful people at the Paso Fino Association, I was able to track down and DNA Chorro's sire and get him registered. With some detective work and help from the rescue organization that sponsored Aci, I was able to get him registered as well.

There is no amount of money I would take for my three Pasos; all challenging, and in my opinion, the best three horses that ever stepped the earth. ■



ISABEL MEMBORABLE PARADISE

Pasos for Pleasure REACHING FOR GOALS

RYAN RICHARDS: 490.75 HOURS

"By recording your dreams and goals on paper, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be."

—MARK VICTOR HANSEN

I have been on a journey to improve my horsemanship and to be able to carry on my father and grandfather's legacy with Paso Fino horses. As part of that journey, I set goals; some large, some small. My initial interest in the Pasos for Pleasure program came from seeing the top ten list in the *Paso Fino Horse World* magazine and reading about those riders' experiences and accomplishments. I was looking for a goal to accomplish with my horses and something to help motivate me in working consistently with my horses.

As someone who feels more at home high in the mountains than in a crowd, the Pasos for Pleasure program seemed like a good fit compared to other activities.

I set the goal to ride enough to have my hours somewhere in the top ten. The program seemed aptly named to also help serve as a reminder to me that owning and riding horses is supposed to be fun. At times the effort, expense, stresses, and heartache that can go along with owning horses can start to make it feel like chore or burden. I believe it is important to remember why we started with them in the first place. If it's not fun, what is the point? Riding a Paso Fino should be, and is, uniquely fun.

Lastly, I set the goal as way of – in my own silly way – paying tribute to my father and grandfather who were responsible for me being fortunate enough to experience and enjoy the Paso Fino breed. My father, Henry Richards, and his close friend, Ray Free, first brought Paso Finos to the state of Utah over 60 years ago. When my grandfather passed, my father carried on that legacy, and now I'm fortunate to have horses that are direct descendants of the original horses they owned.

My horses have the suffix 'Salago' in their names. Salago was portmanteau of sorts that they made by combining the Spanish words Sal and Lago for Salt Lake, where they lived in Utah.

I signed up for the program and downloaded an app for tracking my riding hours. I found it an incredibly useful tool for

recording the hours and getting other interesting data from my rides, such as miles, speeds, elevation gains, tempo, the precise path traveled, etc.

When I started the program, we had a very reliable seasoned gelding but also a number of young horses and even unriden horses. I found participating in the program provided me motivation to get out on my horses on days and times that I otherwise would not have.

Like anything, there were highs and lows. One of the challenges that I faced was the literal highs and lows of the temperature. In Utah where I live, we have both hot summers and cold winters. Last year, we had a record snow fall. Honestly, without the goal to try to log as many hours as I could, I probably would not have ridden at all through much of the winter. We rode out in the snow well into April. During the hottest days of summer, I would go for night rides that I never would have attempted without my goal. After particularly hard days of work, I would go for a ride, rather than succumb to the temptation to sit and relax on the sofa.

Through this experience, I had many memorable moments. I was fortunate to make new friends in the horse world. Some very special times included getting to ride with my family, particularly my father. Seeing him ride my mare, Canela Salago – a seventh generation horse and direct descendant of my grandfather's original stallion, Santigao LaCE – was really special for me. As Canela racked up the miles and went from green to a more seasoned trail horse, it was also gratifying to watch my siblings' children – the fourth generation since my family owned Paso Finos – ride her.

I enjoyed being able to show off the breed and shatter people's stereotypes. I was able to do this by riding in parades and many encounters out on the trails. In one instance, I was out, gaiting fast through the woods on Canela, and came upon another group. They invited me to ride with them, but noted that because I was on a Paso, I wouldn't be able to as my horse couldn't just calmly walk. As Canela walked quietly for few miles, calmly crossed trail obstacles, ignored the flushing grouse and ATVs, they saw past their stereotypes of the breed. On the other end of the spectrum, it was fun to show off their smooth gaits, brio, speed, heart, and endurance.

On one occasion, I was riding my young gelding, Sangre, and

met a woman on a large Thoroughbred. When I told her he was a Paso Fino, her eyes lit up as she exclaimed, "Have him do his little gait!" Our mare, Corcelita, showed the embodiment of the heart, beauty, and grace of a smooth, fast Paso Fino. Our stallion, Tico, turned heads with his brio and beauty. People always wanted to know, what breed he was.

I believe that good, safe trail horse are made through good, deliberate training and experience on the trail. Trail riding is imbued with new and unexpected experiences for both horse and rider. Through participating in the Pasos for Pleasure program, my horses and I grew in knowledge and experience.

We forged deeper bonds of mutual trust. Most importantly, I had a lot of fun along the way.

I hope to perhaps compete in distance riding or other challenges in the future. I would encourage others looking for a goal or fun activity to participate. Edmund Hillary said "You don't have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things . . . You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated, to reach challenging goals." I appreciate the fun, and very accessible, Pasos for Pleasure program and strongly encourage others to participate as well. ■



Pasos for Pleasure
EXPLORING THE UNEXPECTED

Riding Adventures in the Cook County Forest Preserves

ANNALEE FJELLBERG: 322 HOURS

The trails I ride are in the Cook County Forest Preserves, located a few miles from the city of Chicago, and are adjacent to suburban areas. My favorite trail stretches for over fifty miles, extending into another state, and is a favorite with many bikers. These bikers can prove to be a challenge when riding, as sometimes groups of ten or more are riding together,

rushing past everyone – fortunately in a single file line. Over the ten years we’ve ridden these trails, Salina has become used to them, and hardly glances as they rush by. She hears the bikers before I do and moves over to the side of the trail to let them pass.

However, ever since COVID, the trails have become busier – especially on the weekends – and I have counted over 100 people in a time span of two hours. Some are pushing baby strollers, some are dog walking, and some are just enjoying the trail. Most, however, are unfamiliar with horses and need reminding about staying well to the side of the trail when we approach, keeping dogs close to them on a leash, and holding their toddlers’ hands – small children can dart in front of horses, unpredictably.

Sometimes we chat with folks who’ve grown up here and remember when the trails had a lot more horseback riders and a lot less bikers!

It’s also been an ongoing challenge to meet the various Forest Preserve vehicles: trucks, enormous woodchippers, and even cars on the trail. Salina has learned they’re all harmless and, although not fond of going past these strange things, she does, giving them a wide berth.

Our Forest Preserves do prescribed burns to clear away underbrush so that native plants can grow. When this happens – and we never know when it’s going to be done – large areas become enveloped in smoke, which my brave horse walks through without complaint. The volunteers are always surprised to see a horse and rider walking through the smoke.

Every ride can bring something unexpected and a trustworthy horse like Salina makes each ride a unique and enjoyable experience. ■

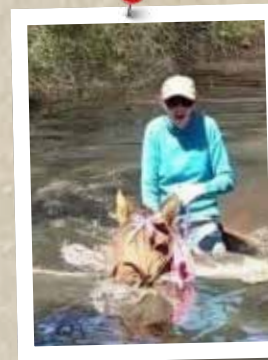


DISCOVERING THE JOY

JENNIFER SHARP: 317.75 HOURS

I have thoroughly enjoyed the Pasos for Pleasure program and would recommend it to all Paso Fino owners. Anytime you receive recognition for spending time riding with your best friends, it is always a good thing.

During our rides, we encountered snakes, bears, coyotes, and skunks. I was the one freaking out, but my horses took it all in stride. While different-colored dirt may pose a problem, snakes and bears seem to be okay with my horses.



One of the greatest joys of riding Paso Finos has been meeting wonderful friends on trail rides. I always stop to let kids pet the horses and offer them a ride. Showing kindness in this world is essential! It doesn’t hurt to pause during a ride to talk to someone about these horses and let them pet them.

I try to ride every day; I have two Paso Finos, alternating between them. Even if you only ride for fifteen minutes a day, get out there and enjoy your Paso. You will find joy in it, and they will, too. ■

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

CATHY BARNES: 272 HOURS

Hello to all you Paso fans! My name is Cathy Barnes, and I recently discovered that I joined Pasos for Pleasure 25 years ago this year. I even have the vest to prove it!



I competed on a beautiful black gelding named Tsar, whom I purchased one year at Nationals. Tsar was a 3-year-old stallion at the time, and Cindy Griffeth rode him for me to observe. I remember thinking how stunning he was and saying to myself, "If I can ride him, I'm going to buy him." Tsar and I had a fantastic time on the trails and competed in endurance for a few years. He earned the title of Paso Fino Endurance Horse of the Year in 2003. He is happily retired now and living the good life with me in Ocala, Florida.

Now, I compete with two palomino geldings.

Patriota Oro SP is 26 years old and still going strong. In the past, we’ve tackled obstacles, participated in Poker rides, enjoyed camping, and, of course, hit the trails.

Fiestas Majestuoso Macho (Jester) is seventeen years old and a Coral LaCE grandson. Jester is definitely more 'go' than 'whoa'. I've only had him for about six months, but he's already proven to be brave on the trails, unafraid of bikes, heavy equipment, traffic, or wildlife, and quite the looker!

I have cherished my time with Pasos for Pleasure for many years. There's truly nothing better than riding a good horse in the woods on a beautiful day!

I hope to see you out there sometime soon! ■



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Pasos for Pleasure HITTING THE TRAILS

ANDREA LORD: 293 HOURS

Isabella de Leader just turned eleven years old. We have been together for almost five years; since May 2019. I am very proud of this little mare. She has had her share of medical issues and surgeries – it has been a real challenge! But we are on a roll now.

We moved from Virginia to Florida in January of 2022 – that took some adjustment, and really changed our riding lifestyle.

These days, we ride the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway several days a week. That is an amazing trail system which has separate trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. Our boarding barn is conveniently located

adjacent to the trail system. We have been building up our distances and working a little on Western Dressage to keep up our ring etiquette.

Isabella and I hope to increase our hours during 2024 and share many more adventures together. ■



TOP TEN AGAIN

FRANCINE NAASKO: 257.75

Hello again! Letty and I have achieved being in the Top Ten Pasos For Pleasure for 2023. I have been participating in this program since around 2001, I believe, and am closing in on the 5000 mile mark.

It's not always been Letty and I. There have been several horses along the way, even a couple of friends' Pasos when mine were unavailable. I originally joined because I figured I was taking lessons and trail riding, anyway, so why not record it and earn some nice things along the way.

With all the trail apps they have now that you can download to your phone, it's so easy to see what you are accumulating. I use *Ramblr* because I also like to track the miles we do.

There have been a few times when there wasn't any riding going on in my life – like the two riding

accidents which required surgery; one on my face (I always wear a helmet now) and a broken wrist. Also, when my horse was unavailable due to different issues or the Florida heat which can really get to you and your horse. There was also that four letter word – work – that got in the way sometimes. But none of that really matters as you go at your own pace with this program. The hours just keep adding up.

I have a sense of adventure and I have been many places and tried different things with my Pasos. My horse, Baillador, was a great one for trying new things. We did parades, obstacle practice and challenges, and cow sorting, just to name a few.

So I guess the moral of this story is: just get out there! Download an app and enjoy your Paso. See what you and they can do! You don't have to do these things with other Pasos, all mine have gotten on very well with all different breeds.

Have fun getting out there and happy trails to you. ■



Pasos for Pleasure EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE



CAROLE GROVES-STAGG:163.50 HOURS

I have participated in this program for a number of years now, but have not made great progress due to things getting in the way. Last year, I was determined to complete 1000 hours. A determined effort was made to ride and ride some more. It was very satisfying to see the hours pile up. Also, it is very nice to spend this time with the horses in the woods. I was thrilled when I achieved my goal.

I would encourage anyone to participate in this program. It's a challenge, and it's very fun to do. At the very least, it's wonderful exercise for both horse and rider. I'm off to a very slow start this year – I need to apply myself and get on with riding! ■

Announcing: THE BUDDY PROGRAM

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Sign Up Today

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WHO DO YOU want to be the next...

AMATEUR OF THE YEAR?

Criteria for Amateur of the Year

Accomplishments: The candidate must have achieved excellence in the show ring at the regional and or national level. This includes honors, awards and commendations the candidate has received.

Contributions: The candidate must have demonstrated substantial and sustained contributions to the breed at the local, regional and national level. This category includes contributions (not monetary) the candidate has made to youth, other amateur owners and promotion of the breed. Contributions could be in a volunteer or elected capacity.

Sportsmanship: The candidate must exhibit conduct becoming to a sports enthusiast including but not limited to honest rivalry and graceful acceptance of results.

Horsemanship: The candidate must exhibit excellence in skill of riding, exhibiting, management, and specifically in the care and well being of her/his horse(s).

Nominators for Amateur of the Year

Please submit:

1. Nomination form.
2. Short typed biography of your nominee (500 words or less. Biographies that exceed the word limit may be edited), which demonstrates how she/he has fulfilled the criteria.

Deadline for Amateur of the Year

Nominations for Amateur of the Year may be submitted by any PFHA member, and should be submitted via email or mail by **August 1st**.

Please send
nominations to:

Paso Fino Horse Association
1003 Twilight Trail, Suite 2,
Frankfort, KY 40601

OR

info@pfha.org



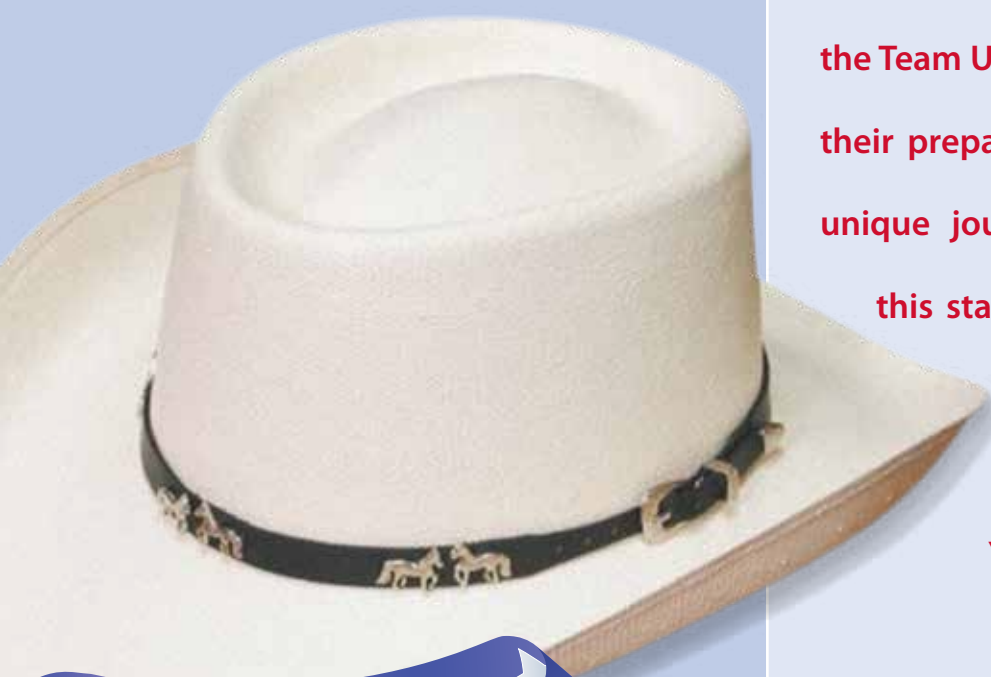
Sergio Garcia
2023



Amateur of the Year

Q AND A

with
Team
USA



The 2024 Confepaso Youth Mundial is set to be an exciting event that unites young equestrians from around the globe to compete in a series of challenges showcasing the elegance and versatility of Paso Fino horses. This international competition, organized by Confepaso, highlights the exceptional skills and dedication of youth riders while fostering a spirit of camaraderie and cultural exchange. As Team USA prepares to participate in this prestigious event, we had the opportunity to gain insight from the Team USA members and coaches into their preparation, expectations, and the unique journey that brought them to this stage. Here are their stories and perspectives as they gear up for the 2024 Confepaso Youth Mundial.

The Coaches

LUIS CONDE



Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I've been riding my whole life. I am the third generation of a family of four generations of Paso Fino horse riders.

Q. What inspired you to be a coach for the Mundial team?

A. As soon as they approached me to be one of the coaches for the Team USA, I didn't think twice about accepting it because I love working with children, teenagers, and adults with their horses and in riding classes. When I lived in Puerto Rico, I had my riding and equitation school. I have always been involved in horse riding and equitation. I have the experience of participating as a coach in a Mundial because I had the honor of being the coach of the Puerto Rico team in the Mundial 2014 in Pereira, Colombia. The opportunity to be one of the coaches of Team USA – I couldn't say 'no'. I am more than honored by the approach.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goals are that all the horses that are under my training come out in optimal condition and that every person who rides my horses – whether child or adult – does not have any problems with them and enjoys themselves so they can achieve their dreams with their horses.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. There are so many! But, I think I can say winning World Cup, watching my children win Mundiales, and seeing the result of my everyday work in the shows.



JAVIER SUAREZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I've been riding and competing my entire life.

Q. What inspired you to be a coach for the Mundial team?

A. I love to help and enhance people's

lives through our horses.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. I have already achieved many of my childhood dreams with horses – competing, breeding, developing, etc. Now, I don't

really have final goals; horses are a wonderful journey that never ends.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I have so many wonderful memories with the horses, but the ones that stick the most are the ones you share with your loved ones.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I love to celebrate life around family, cooking, sports, music, and more horses.

JORGE NICHOLAS SUAREZ



Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding my entire life. My dad, Jorge Suarez, is a trainer. As a baby, I would fall asleep on the back of whichever horse he was training.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I have always been inspired by my family's legacy. My dad and his brothers all competed when they were younger and now, me, my siblings, and all of my cousins have done the same.

Now, I've stepped into the coaching seat to extend the knowledge that has been passed down to me from my dad and uncles. Our family has over 40 years of experience in this breed and I feel it is my turn to share that wisdom.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goals in the Paso Fino breed are to continue my family's legacy by training the best horses in the world and becoming the best trainer of this craft. I hope to grow my business as a trainer and one day leave my own legacy.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I am fortunate to have many. I'm proud to hold the record for the most consecutive gold medals in the Confepaso Mundial. However, I know my favorite memories are the ones to come in my professional career.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I have a love-hate relationship with golf, so when I'm not working, I like to go golfing with my buddies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

The Team

JOSE ALICEA

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I've been riding since I was five years old – 34 years to be more precise!

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. Representing my country has always been my passion and I will do it whenever the opportunity arises.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goal has always been to serve as an inspiration to young riders, to represent my country in the best possible way, and to be inducted into the Paso Fino Hall of Fame.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When I turned 24, I felt great nostalgia as I completed my career as a Paso Fino rider. In 2018, I received a call announcing a new event such as the 25+ category and an invitation to participate in it. After having been out of competition for almost 10 years, I participated in the 2018 Paso Fino World Cup and won a gold medal.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I like to spend time with my family, mother, and siblings. I love traveling and learning about new cultures and their gastronomy.



Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To master the fine arts of the Paso Fino step and also to expand my skill set. Not only do I want to be able to look fluid with the horse, but to feel more 'one' with the equine. Equitation has always come fairly easily to me, although I know there is always room for improvement, especially in this sport.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite Paso Fino-related memory is going to my parents' country and getting the chance to represent USA as a PFHA equestrian member and rider and placing in the top five. It will forever stick with me as one of my top Paso Fino achievements; taking into account that it was my first time taking part in an international competition that was non-Mundial-related.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Whenever I am not busy with practicing for competitions or preparing myself for any important upcoming challenges, I enjoy going to the gym with my friends and taking workout classes like Pilates or hot yoga, especially since it helps me strengthen my muscles for the sport.

SABRINA ALVAREZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding for three years; since February 2021.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. The desire to represent my country and the opportunity to compete against the best riders.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. I have three main goals: improve my equitation; participate in the Mundial and win; and to develop a stronger bond with my horse.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite Paso Fino memory is when my parents surprised me during practice at the farm with a horse with a big red bow.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy running and traveling the world with my family and friends.



HECTOR ALEJANDRO AQUINO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding since I was three years old; this year will be nine years riding Paso Fino horses.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I have always wanted to be part of Team USA!

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. One of my riding goals is to win many competitions and hopefully in the future be a professional rider.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory right now is when I won my first National title and when I made Team USA.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. In my free time, I enjoy playing football with my friends.



NEISHMARIE AQUINO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding for seven years now.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. Something that inspired me to try out for the Mundial Team was the passion and love I have for horses. The dedication and hard work I have been putting into this sport since 2018 has been tremendous and Mundial is a perfect place to show off everything that I have learned the past few years.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My horseback riding goals are to one day win a National or International Championship title.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and exploring the world.



VICTORIA BERMUDEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding horses since I was three years old. I'm very excited to be participating in my second Youth Paso Fino Mundial. I have enjoyed riding since I was a toddler.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. My drive for competing and my passion for horses lead me to start trying out for Team USA in 2021. After the amazing experience in Cali, Colombia, in 2022, I decided to try out for the team a second time for Puerto Rico 2024.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To bring back a medal from the Youth Mundial.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. Participating in the Youth Mundial 2022.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy playing tennis, I have a passion for makeup, and collecting sneakers.



MARIA E. BURGOS

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding horses since I was three years old and started competing with Paso Fino Horses when I was nine years old.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. Equitation has always been one of my favorite things to do, and the adrenaline when in the ring while you are competing is an amazing feeling.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To continue to become a better rider in the show ring and keep working with my horse to do better every day.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When I first won my first National Title on a horse named Impacto de la Tormenta – it felt amazing!



ISABELLA ALVAREZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have grown up around equines, but from age three to age thirteen, I was put into competitive dance. I wanted to find a new passion. I loved going to the farm for family parties or gatherings but never involved myself in the Paso Fino breed until I decided to start fresh with a new sport.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. Since I got the opportunity to represent Team USA in 2022, I was looking forward to being able to represent my country's team once more. Mundial was such an eye-opening experience for me for the Paso Fino breed and I loved the learning experience and the great memories that came along with it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

CONGRATULATIONS

to our 2024 GNS Licensed
Officials

Thank you to all who put their name in!

Permanent Judges:

Angela Ochoa

Willman Rodriguez

Fino Judges:

Derek Fernandez

Mirta De La Cruz

Paul Marlowe

Pleasure/Performance Judges

Cindy Griffeth

Keith Dane

Nick Burgos

Stewards

Andrea Lord

Adele Maurer

Paulette Denault-Bryce

We are pleased to announce that Nanett Read is our
Alternate Steward and Debbie Rash is our Alternate Judge

See you September 25-29, 2024 at WEC, Ocala!

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. When I'm not riding, I'm working with horses and caring for them. Even though it is my job, if you don't see me riding or competing, I enjoy doing my job and saving horses.



KAROL MARIANA BUSTOS DIAZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding since I was one year old.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. First, I longed to be able to continue riding since it is something that I love. This led me to wish from the depths of my heart to be able to continue practicing my sport, and to be able to reach the shores of the United States. I migrated to this country with my parents and my dog, Simón, and thanks to the help of angels along the way, today I am part of Team USA!

It has been my dream since I was nine years old to be part of a great team like Team USA. I know I can represent this country; this sport is my life and I want to do a good job! I work in the only sport I have practiced since I was little.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To make a great presentation at the World Championship, give my best there and improve my horsemanship, and to continue learning.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When I was about nine years old, I went to my first National Competition and I earned a third place, but I was very happy because I always wanted to compete. I realized that I could do a better job and I started to improve and practice more and have more discipline in this sport.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Watching horse movies, drawing, I am on my school's athletics team, I go to the gym, I spend time with my parents and Simón, I play volleyball, soccer, and basketball with my friends.

KAREN CERDAN

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I've been riding since I was two-and-a-half years old.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. To represent my country, try out new horses, and enjoy what I love to do.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. Work hard to win first places and enjoy the ride.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When I got my mare and when my colt was born

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Playing, drawing, making bracelets.



SHERIDAN CORTÁZAR

Q. How long have you been riding?

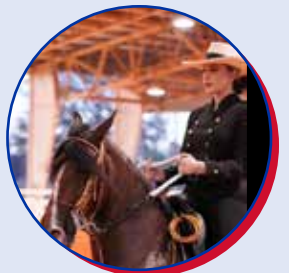
A. I have been riding my whole life! When I was a baby, my father used to carry me around when he was riding, and as soon I could sit by myself on a saddle and hold my reins, I started riding on my own. I definitely love to ride horses!!

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. My desire to perform and give my best grew in me and I saw this as the perfect opportunity to give back in gratitude to God and to this amazing country that has opened the doors to victory.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To improve myself in every way by learning each day from the horses and with each experience I share with them. I get to let free all the potential God has bestowed me with, and all the passion that runs in my bloodline, that started in my great grandfather and down to each generation and, finally, to me. So, one of my main goals is to stand my banners up for God, myself, my family, and the country I am representing.



Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I embrace in my mind and heart with much joy that very special moment when I got to compete for the very first time in the United States of America with El Secreto De Besilu, an amazing horse that I'd just met and trained with for a very short time before the competition. Considering that I hadn't competed in many years since I left Colombia and El Secreto and I were just getting to know each other – and I was in a foreign arena – I felt so proud for all we achieved. Not only on that day, but several other times when we won at the Championship .

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy nature and outdoor activities such as going to the beach during summer and going to the snow to visit my parents on the farm in the winter. I enjoy visiting museums and learning about other cultures and historic places. I also enjoy art, dancing, modeling, and photography.

BIANKA DEL VALLE

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I was two weeks old my first time on a horse's back and I have been hooked ever since.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. The opportunity to represent my country while doing what I love.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. The goal I have is to improve my riding skills by riding all different kinds of horses. I feel every horse is different and can teach me something new. With this experience, I hope to perform well in the show ring.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is rescuing and nurturing my horse back to health. It was a two-year process before I was able to ride her regularly. After the recovery, we went on to win our very first Grand National Championship together. I will forever be grateful for the joy and pleasure this horse has brought to me, my family, and friends.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Outside of the show ring, I enjoy riding my horses on the trails, cheerleading, and dancing.



LENA FIGUEROA

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding horses for my entire life.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I was inspired to try out for the Mundial team because one of my goals is to ride for Team USA again.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite Paso Fino-related memory is probably when we would go to the Ohio show and when I won my first Grand National Championship title.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Other activities I enjoy are going shopping, hanging out with my friends and family, and running track.



VALERIA GARCIA

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I started riding at ten years old.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I began participating in International Equitation four years after I started riding; it was a big challenge, but I immediately loved it. As I kept competing, I realized I wanted to push myself further, and so with the help of my coach, we decided to try out for Team USA.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goal is to get better and better every day. My love for the sport pushes me to want to be the best that I can be.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. The first time I won in International Equitation, which was at the Ocala New Year Paso Fino Festival 2024.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I am an aspiring photographer in my spare time, and I love taking pictures of horses and loved ones.



ANGELINA GOMEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding for seven years, beginning when I was eight years old.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. The first time I tried out for Team USA was in 2022, and I didn't think I was going to get chosen, but I did! This has allowed me to improve as a rider. This year, what inspired me was that I loved my experience when I went to Columbia to represent my country and I wanted to live it again in Puerto Rico.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goal is to keep improving each day and to help other riders to accomplish their goals as well.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When I won equitation 7-12 Championship in 2022 because my horse had gotten sick on the way to Nationals and I had no horse to ride. So we rented a horse and I was able to win the competition!

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy building Legos and talking to my friends on the phone.

CHLOE GOMEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding for four years with the last two-and-a-half years being competitive and going to nearly all the shows.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. It has been a goal of mine since I saw the 2022 Mundial. It is a great opportunity and honor to represent Team USA this year!

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To represent Team USA with excellence in the upcoming Mundial and continue to learn as much as I can each time I train, so I can become the best rider I can be.



Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is from the 2023 Nationals Youth 10-12 yrs Championship in Ocala when my mare, Andrastea de Milagro, and I were selected for first place. I was so happy to be able to share this moment next to my sister, family, trainers, and friends.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I play competitive beach volleyball as well as indoor volleyball and enjoy getting together with friends.

SOPHIE GOMEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding competitively for two-and-a-half years, going to nearly all the shows. I began riding four years ago.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I saw the Mundial in 2022 and knew I wanted to represent our country one day. It is an honor to be able to do that.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goal is to continue to learn to be a better rider so I am better prepared each time I enter the arena; and to represent our Team USA this summer to the highest level possible.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is from the 2023 Spectrum Youth Championship 10-12 yrs category in Ocala when my mare, Primogénita de Huracán, and I were selected for first place. I was so happy to be able to share this moment alongside my sister, family, trainers, and friends.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I compete in indoor volleyball, beach volleyball, and enjoy spending time with friends.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



CORAL JIREH GONZALEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I started participating in August of 2020; so almost four years.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. One of the things that inspired me to try out for the team is the opportunity to represent the country where I was born and raised. Also, it is a great opportunity to gain more experience in this sport.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goal is to do a good presentation at this Mundial in Puerto Rico. I'd love to continue learning and serve as a role model for other young people to participate with Paso Finos.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. One of my favorite Paso Fino memories is when I got my mare, Certeza. You could say she is my heart horse; the horse that really made me love this sport with all my heart. My parents surprised me with Certeza on my birthday as a gift. I was so happy I couldn't contain my enjoyment. It was a really special day to me; one I'll never forget.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. In my free time, I enjoy other sports like track and volleyball. At my church, I participate in Fine Arts in the category Human Video. Also, another thing I like to do is contribute in activities for the community such as health fairs, festivals, parades, delivering gifts during Christmas and food to those in need.

DYLAN GONZALEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I've been riding for as long as I can remember! When I was little, my grandpa Luis used to babysit me, and one day, when I was about three or four years old, I tried to climb onto a mare named Veterana. She was lying down taking a rest but she let me sit on her back! Then, on my fifth birthday, we were taking pictures on the farm, and grandpa surprised me by putting me on a mare, Julieta de Los Reyes, without a saddle!



Even though I have Autism, I've learned that there's no limit to what I can achieve if I put my heart into it.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I love horses so much and I didn't want Autism to stop me from being a part of something I enjoy. I believe that as long as you give your best and follow your heart, anything is possible, no matter what challenges you face.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. I dream of riding alongside other kids, showing everyone that having Autism doesn't mean I can't do what I love.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. One of my favorite memories is from my first competition at Clemson with the Piedmont Association in 2021. They played the "Coco" song, and I got to ride with other kids in the Walk Corto lead line class. It was so much fun!

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. When I'm not riding, I love playing with my cousins, riding 4-track horses at the farm, helping to feed the horses, and practicing my equitation. I believe that if you do things with your heart, anything is possible!

MATILDA GONZALEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I started riding in January 2021, and I have never gone more than three weeks without riding since then.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

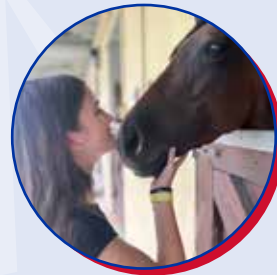
A. My Coach, Luis Carlos Cadena. He always believed in my equitation skills and encouraged me to start participating in International Equitation. If it weren't for his support and enthusiasm, I would not be where I am today. Once I started showing in International Equitation classes, I knew that I wanted to take it all the way and try out for the Mundial team.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My dream is to win a gold medal at the Mundial. I want to make my team, coaches, and parents proud; and I want to represent my country to the best of my ability.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I have several, my top three are:



MILA HERNANDEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding since I was three years old, so I have been riding about four years.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I went to Columbia in 2022 and wanted another opportunity to do it again.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To continue to work hard to improve and have fun. I would like horses to always be a part of my life.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. Attending the Mundial in 2022 and I love it when I am at the farm and I ride for fun – I get to gallop and be free with my horse.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I like having fun, going boating, swimming, and fishing.

1. My participation in Ocala Cup International 2022, when I had my first category and championship wins. In that show, I was able to achieve two category wins and two championship wins with my first mare, Rosa Sublime.

2. The first time I also won by unanimous decision was an amazing feeling, that happened in Nationals 2023 with my horse, El Viajero del Castillo.

3. When my parents and Coach Jaimito presented me with my Fino mare, Jerusalem de Carrion. That day was a dream come true.

MIROSLAVA ISHUTINA

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I started to like horses a few years ago with my friend who already was riding horses and I really fell in love with the sport. The longer I rode, the more I liked it.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I My friend inspired me to ride, but when I really got serious about this, I wanted to be a part of Team USA.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My horseback riding goal is to win Nationals.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite Paso Fino memory is when I won the Championship in Ocala. I was really happy!

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I like to play volleyball, cheerleading practice at school, and I also like spending time with my friends and family.



VALENTINA MELO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding for about eight years, since I was two-and-a-half years old, and competing since 2021. I've ridden different Paso horses such as Pleasure, Fino, Performance, and Trocha. Lately, I've been slowly learning Trocha y Galope.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I saw others ride on the team and wanted to do something exciting! Being with partners from different countries; I wanted to represent the flag of my birth country.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My riding goals in general are to keep riding and being with my horses. For the Mundial, I want to stand on the podium. I aim to be an example for other female riders of all ages. As I love to say, nothing is impossible; the word itself says ... IM POSSIBLE. - Audrey Hepburn



CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is riding bareback on a horse and playing a game called "pañuelito" with my horse friends. It was very funny. Also, when I got to choose my first performance mare, Amapola JK, who is now in heaven. It was a hard challenge, but I loved her from the first sight. She was very 'chucara', but we complemented each other. I love and enjoy riding horses all the time; horses are the most noble animals in the world.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy playing volleyball and spending time with my friends, family, and pets.



ANGELICA MIRANDA

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I am sixteen years old and have been riding horses since I was eight. It began as something fun and just an extracurricular activity, but turned into competition in less than a year. It's been an interesting ride, to say the least. New friends, numerous competitions, three Team USA tryouts

(including this one), disappointments, happy times, but most important, I don't stop learning from every one of these moments.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. My parents make all this possible and support me. I've had the honor of meeting Coaches and Riders who have supported me and guided me and I'm grateful for them. They have inspired me to work hard and continue to better myself in this process.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. Trying out for Team USA has been a goal for quite awhile and it has finally come true. Competing against the best riders in my age category is exciting and inspires me to work harder. I know the experience will be great, but the competition will be the best experience of it all.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. When I'm not at the farm riding, I'm spending time with my family and my best friend, Sophia. I love the beach and training my dog, Kira.

KATALEYA NELSON

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I am seven years old and have been in love with horses for as long as I can remember. I have been riding for three-and-a-half years.



Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I was inspired watching the 2022 Mundial and seeing a few of my teammates and several coaches out there. Since then, I dreamed of being out there one day. For the past two years, I have made it my main priority to be on Team USA and bring back the gold medal just like my coach, Coral. To be able to experience attending a Mundial with the coach I started my horse journey with is amazing.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I have been in several competitions, but two of my favorite memories were the time I got to compete on my own horse, Testimonio, in Spectrum and my second memorable moment was when I competed at the winter show – after not competing for over eight months – and came in second place out of ten competitors.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. When I'm not riding, I enjoy gymnastics and drawing horses.

LUKAS OSORIO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been exposed to horses since I was one year old, started training professionally when I was four years old, and made it to Team USA 2022 and now 2024.



Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I love challenges, I'm very competitive, and I don't like to lose. I believe I can bring a medal to the US.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To become better every day.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I have a few memories that that bring me happiness and show the results of my hard work.

My accomplishments include:

- Extravaganza Champion 2022
- Grand National Champion 2023
- Spectrum International Champion 2023
- Trocha Filies & Mares Reserve Champion (the first competition against my father)

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I play soccer, PS5, and go to the pool. I also love pizza and ice cream.

MARTIN PAYAN

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I've been riding for twelve years. I began riding when I was three years old.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I was inspired by my love of horses and my desire to once again make the team to

represent at the Mundial.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My goals are to win a gold medal at the Mundial and to help people understand how good horseback riding is.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is when I went to the Mundial in 2018 in Ocala. I didn't win anything, but I had a great time with my friends and family.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I like to play soccer and just spend time with my friends and family.



SOPHIA PRADO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I started riding during the pandemic. My parents told me they needed to find an activity for me for my development and horseback riding seemed a safe activity. Plus, I love horses.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. For the past two summers, I have set goals with my parents. I wanted to challenge myself and they asked me what my number one goal would be, and I said, "To make it to the Mundial 2024".

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. I ride because I enjoy it and I love the horses. I get to be an athlete and share the moments with my horse! My goals for now are to do my best every time I ride and enjoy every moment.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I'll always remember the first time I competed: I was five years old and I was smiling from ear to ear – the sound of the board was magical. It made me feel wonderful! Plus, I got a blue ribbon for Walk Corto Leadline.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I also enjoy dance, art, and am currently fostering two Shepard-mix puppies.

FRANCISCO RAMIREZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I started at five years old!

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. My parents.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To win a championship!

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. Watching my dad compete at shows.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I love to practice and play soccer.



KATHERINE RENGIFO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding since I was around eleven years old, so about nine years now.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I had seen and heard of other kids competing in equitation and found it super interesting, so I wanted to compete in the class as well. Then tryouts for the 2018 Mundial were going on, and I decided I wanted to try out for the team. Since I had won silver in 2018, I tried out with the intention of going for gold for the 2022 Mundial, and I was successful. Now this year, I want to try and go for that second gold!

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To be able to continue making these memories for as long as I can, and to make my family proud.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is a little bittersweet, but it would definitely be Mundial 2022 in Cali. I won my first gold medal in my parents' hometown while dedicating my entire ride to them because my family was not able to be there with me.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Spending time with family and friends or going to visit my horses since I don't get to see them as often while I'm in college.

STEPHANIE RODRIGUEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding since I was two years old. I come from a family of Caballistas where it was highly encouraged from a young age.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. My sister, Coral Rodriguez, inspired me to try out for Mundial. She won the gold medal in 2022, and since I watched her win, it's been my goal.



Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. I want to win the gold medal and be able to compete all year round.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory is Nationals 2021, at which I won three championships: Equitation, Horsemanship, and Performance!

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy playing soccer – I currently play for my college team, FMU. I love going on trail rides every time I get a chance, and hanging out with my friends.

SOPHIE ROMERO CAMPO

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I encountered horses when I was eleven months old, and it was the first time I rode one. I've been competing for two years.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. Two years ago, I started competing with my "chalanería" school, JS, located in Miami. In the different competitions, every time I enter the ring, I feel great excitement, responsibility towards my horse, and a lot of joy. It was then that I told my parents that I wanted to belong to the United States Team to travel to the World Championship.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. I want to be a champion, but what I desire most is to continue learning more every day and to enjoy with all my love the moments when I ride a horse.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. What I remember most is when I competed for the first time, being alone with my horse on the track, doing the figure-eights, and going through the board – it generated great emotion and happiness in my heart.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I like to sing and I also dance at an academy.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

ADRIANNA SANCHEZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding for three years.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I was inspired by watching all the amazing kids when I first began riding. I pushed myself to become an amazing rider as well.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To get a well-deserved championship ribbon at Nationals and Mundial.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When my coach, Jorge Pineda (pechu), had all his students come out to the farm one day and we all took our horses out for an exhibition to show off our riding skills. We all dressed up in white tops like a real competition.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy playing lacrosse, doing cheer, and running.



SARAH THURMOND

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I'm seventeen years old, and I have been riding for six years.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I was inspired to try out for the Mundial team by my trainer, Beth Uselman, and her daughter, Lena.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My main goal right now is to keep improving on my riding skills and do my part for the team in Puerto Rico this summer.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite memory by far has to be winning Grand National Champion in Equitation this past September on my horse, Soberano de JH.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. Outside of horses, I enjoy various outdoor activities with my family, such as snow and water sports, hiking 14,000 ft. mountains each summer, and being very involved in school sports and clubs. I also enjoy drawing and all other sorts of art.



JAY SUAREZ

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. For as long as I can remember.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. Because I love to ride horses and competing to try to win gold has been a dream since I was little.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. To become the best version of myself and to represent my family.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. When I was able to complete with my sister in the same class on my birthday and we placed first and second.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy playing volleyball and basketball, but my most enjoyable activity is riding horses.



MELODY TOBENAS

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding horses for the past three years.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. My inspiration started when I watched the 2022 Mundial. I remember seeing all those amazing riders and envisioned myself as one of them. Now, I'm living my dream of forming part of Team USA.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. My ideal horseback riding goal is to bring home the gold! However, I'm enjoying every moment of this process. I love getting to know new people and being around such talented riders.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

WHO DO YOU

want to be the next...



Youth of the Year

YOUTH OF THE YEAR?

Criteria for Youth of the Year

1. Attend one clinic within PFHA or outside equine establishment (promoting Paso Fino Horses)
2. Attend at least one regional show and show in one to two classes
3. Record riding hours, logging at least 20 hours in a single show season (October-August)
4. Record volunteer hours with affiliated region (ex. ribbon presenter, gate keeper, setup/take down, show promotion, etc).

Nominators for Youth of the Year

Please submit:

1. Nomination form.
2. Short typed biography of your nominee (500 words or less. Biographies that exceed the word limit may be edited).
3. Youth Log Form.

Deadline for Youth of the Year

Nominations for Youth of the Year may be made by current PFHA members and should be sent via email or mail by **August 15th**.

Youth of the year can be awarded in the 7-9 age group, the 10-12 age group, the 13-15 age group, and the 16-17 age group separately.



Isabella Alvarez
2023



Chloe Gomez
2023

Please send nominations to:

Paso Fino Horse Association
1003 Twilight Trail, Suite 2, OR info@pfha.org
Frankfort, KY 40601

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. My favorite core memory is the first time I placed first in International Equitation. The judges announced me as third place, but quickly realized there was an error. My heart started racing and, in a split second, everything changed. I had won first place!

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy playing volleyball and reading a good book. But, my favorite thing to do will always be riding horses!!

ISABELLA TOBON

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been riding practically since before I was born as my mom competed two weeks prior to giving birth. I have been riding from being a baby in my father's arms to riding in a dual saddle as a toddler to Walk Corto Leadline to now.



Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. I have been riding for Team USA since I was twelve, with the exception of last year's Youth Mundial. Now that I am older and free time has become challenging to come by, I decided to try out again this year as it may be one of my last chances to compete alongside all of the talented riders on my team as well as other teams. It is an honor to be able to represent my country, doing what I love the most. So when the opportunity presented itself, it was something I could not pass up.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

A. This year, a gold medal will be my primary goal. My overall goal – no matter which arena I enter during competition – is to enjoy what I love while carrying out the legacy my father and my grandfathers paved for me. My goal each ride is always to make my family proud no matter the outcome, whether that means taking home a blue ribbon or simply riding each horse to the best of its abilities.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I would have to say my favorite memory is when I started taking competition seriously with my childhood Pleasure gelding, Signo del Juncal, and my father passing down his wisdom to me. Winning ribbons will always be special, but the

memories I hold closest to my heart are the practices spent with my father by my side.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. I enjoy working out, spending time with loved ones, and traveling.

AMY YARBROUGH

Q. How long have you been riding?

A. I have been competing with Paso Fino horses since I was four years old, but my mom actually found out she was pregnant with me at her first Nationals! So, I guess you could say I've been riding since before I was born.

Q. What inspired you to try out for the Mundial team?

A. This will be my third time competing for Team USA. A long-standing personal goal I have is to win gold for my country and I feel I now have gained the necessary experience and knowledge to have a chance at doing that this year. I feel I have more confidence in myself as a rider to go into the competition 110% ready.

Q. What are your horseback riding goals?

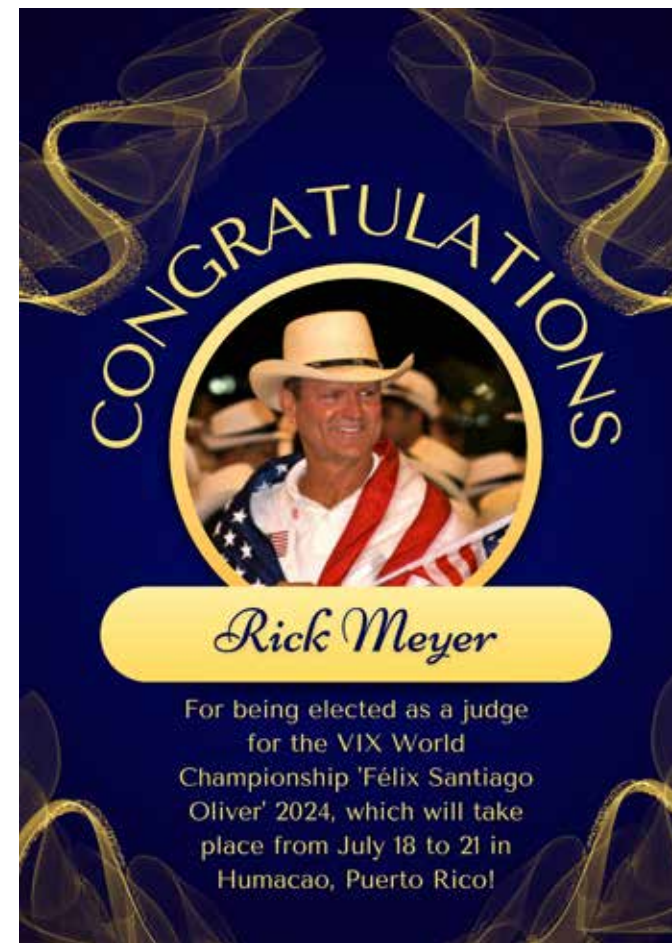
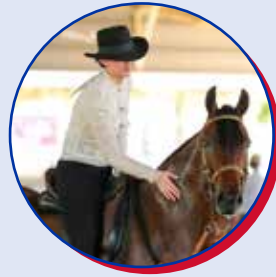
A. My goals are to establish an internationally-renowned breeding program, alongside my mom, dedicated to the utmost respect for quality and class. I hope to continue to grow our name for generations to come.

Q. What is your favorite Paso Fino-related memory?

A. I am extremely lucky to have countless amazing memories in this breed. One memory I find special was winning the Pleasure Amateur Owner Mares Championship at the 2023 Grand National Championship Show. It was a class I've always admired as a little girl since it's notoriously known for being packed with mares with multiple work-offs. I won with my mare, Tejana del Conde, that my trainer bred and trained from the beginning, which also made it even more special. He also won the Pleasure Mares Championship in the professional division that same year.

Q. What other activities do you enjoy in your free time?

A. If I'm not riding or studying to go to vet school, I enjoy traveling with my family and spending time with my friends. ■





Board of Directors
APPROVED MEETING DATES

June 20, 2024
Zoom
6PM EST

August 22, 2024
Zoom
6PM EST

November 16, 2024
Frankfort, KY
9AM-5PM EST

FROM THE TREASURER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Region, and the Deep South Region. This is a good cross-section of representation from different parts of the country.

Nearly 20 years ago, our current Vice-President, BJ Schuler, was Chair of the PFHA Planning Committee. BJ orchestrated an in-person Strategic Planning Session with the Board for one day in Atlanta. The facilitator, Carol Alm, opened by saying "If you are working on what is in the best for your breed, there will be very little to disagree about".

There is a genuine and sincere intent from our Board of Directors to put what is in the best interest of our breed at the forefront of their decisions. Thank you to everyone for taking the time to serve the PFHA. ■

-ROBIN RATLIFF, TREASURER

WELCOME NEW PFHA MEMBERS

AS OF MAY 11, 2024

Andrea Henriquez	Miami, FL	Susanna Morrow	San Antonio, TX	Jamie Mize	Laurinburg, NC
Emma Henriquez	Miami, FL	Enid Reyes	Bridgeton, NJ	Calvin Taylor Blanco	Miami, FL
Gabriel Henriquez	Miami, FL	Wilson Jiménez	Bridgeton, NJ	Renata Garcia Vazquez	Houston, TX
Luka Henriquez	Miami, FL	Jonathan Lopez	Camden, NJ	Lorena Mukina	Edinboro, PA
Sarah Mognoni	Waterford Works, NJ	Marco Dicenso	Kendall, FL	Sue Raynor	Cove, OR
Stefanie Leif	Brunswick, GA	Yeira Perez	Camden, NJ	Sarah Whitworth	Claremore, OK
Valentina Lirio-Gonzalez	Miami, FL	Angela Pena	Miami, FL	Kassidy Faust	Bernville, PA
Vanessa Lirio	Miami, FL	Christian Gomez	Miami, FL	Jamie Vickery	Newberry, FL
Vanessa Lirio	Miami, FL	Maria Gomez	Miami, FL	Oliver Menendez	Miami, FL
Laylah Solivan	Humacao, PR	Martin Gomez	Miami, FL	Claudia Rychkov	North Miami Beach, FL
Fabio Hernandez	Doral, FL	Jeronimo Giraldo	Palmetto Bay, FL	Russ Murphy	Hendersonville, TN
Haydee Mora	Winter Garden, FL	Pro Masters FL, LLC	Lake City, FL	Slava Rychkov	North Miami Beach, FL
Leonardo E. Atencio	Winter Garden, FL	Simon Caalela Calero	Sw Ranches, FL	Catalina Gamarra	Doral, FL
Luis Alejandro Atencio	Winter Garden, FL	Alma Enriquez	Miami, FL	Gabriela Gamarra	Doral, FL
Martha Sepulveda	Doral, FL	Angela Realpozo Gonzales	Miami, FL	Gacavi Farm LLC	Miami, FL
Samuel Hernandez	Doral, FL	Jimmy Bedoya	Fort Loundon, PA	Javier Gamarra	Doral, FL
Kenia Chirino	Miami, FL	Mila Kilincoglu	Miami Beach, FL	Mariajose Gamarra	Doral, FL
Luis Chirion	Miami, FL	Valentina Quintero Sanchez	Miami, FL	Victoria Gamarra	Doral, FL
Nicole Chirion	Miami, FL	Veronica Schneider	Key Biscayne, FL	Alyssa Cabrera	Claremore, OK
Robxaily Z Caraballo Quiñones	GURABO, PR	Angel Salcedo	Carrollton, TX	Michelle Kolenski	Toms River, NJ
Camilo Franco	Doral, FL	Isabella Chacin	Carrollton, TX		
Jenni Franco	Doral, FL	Luke Esquivel	Miami Springs, FL		

Paso Fino 2024 MAGAZINE ADVERTISING RATES

The Official Publication of the Paso Fino Horse Association

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SEPTEMBER
25-29TH
2024



**GRAND
NATIONAL
SHOW**

World Equestrian Center - Ocala, Florida