

# UPPER MIDWEST ENDURANCE AND COMPETITIVE RIDES ASSOCIATION



## RIDER REPRESENTATIVE

### ELECTION – Electronic Voting:

The Rider Representative election will begin on January 2nd and continue through January 15th.

The voting process will be using an electronic online election tool called “Election Runner”. On Jan 2nd, you will receive an email from UMECRA Elections with a Voter ID and Voter Key. Both of these values will need to be entered when you login to the system. Family memberships receive two sets of Voter ID/Keys for members 18 and older, which will be sent either to the primary email address twice or to each unique email address if one was provided or on record. Each Voter ID is only allowed to vote once. Note: The voter ID is also your UMECRA ID.

Once you login, you will be able to select up to 4 candidates or, if you choose not to vote, please submit an “abstain” option. Once you vote, you will not be able to change your selections.

The results of the election will be announced at the annual meeting in January.

To read the biographies of each candidate, please refer to this document. It can also be found on the UMECRA website. If you have any issues with the voting system, please contact Deb Moe via Facebook, by email at [debralmoe@gmail.com](mailto:debralmoe@gmail.com) or phone at 715.222.3626

## Convention!!!!

Okay folks – time to get those reservations in!

When: January 19-21, 2024

Where: Gladstone, Michigan -  
Terrace Bay Hotel  
7124 P Rd, Gladstone, MI  
49837

Everyone is invited to come to the 2024 UMECRA convention in Gladstone, Michigan (near Escanaba). You don't need to be getting an award to attend! Our hosts will be the Great Lakes Distance Riding Association (GLDRA) at the beautiful Terrace Bay Hotel. There will be AHDRA awards on Friday night, speakers, member meeting and banquet on Saturday, a silent auction and of course, awards!

Use the code UMECRA when calling or registering online for our special room rate.

Banquet registration form is included at the end of the newsletter. Banquet reservations are due by January 10<sup>th</sup>!

**Electronic registration and payment available on**

<https://payumecra.com/fees>

**For room reservations:**

[Terrace Bay Hotel Link](#)

Or call 906-786-7554

for good cause shown, shall retain voting rights for the next Annual Meeting. (1/27/18)

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## Silent Auction!!!!

Don't forget to bring something for the silent auction! Get creative! Baskets of goodies, books, homemade items, new and used tack and clothing are just a few ideas. Let's have some fun with this!

Questions? Contact Diane Meinders at 616.706.6478 or email Diane.Meinders@Trace3.com

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The UMECRA Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2024 during the Annual Convention.

### Ride Manager Delegate Selection – UMECRA By-laws

#### ARTICLE III NOTICE OF MEETINGS, QUORUMS & VOTING

Section 5. DELEGATES. Each endurance/competitive trail ride sanctioned the immediately preceding year/season, by one of its ride managers as listed on its sanctioning form shall submit the names of its official voting delegates or its authorized alternate voting delegate(s) [also referred to as proxies] to be recorded by the corporate Secretary prior to any meeting of members. Ride managers as listed on their sanctioning form, or as amended, must have actively participated in the management of the sanctioned event. Ride managers of cancelled rides, who have paid their sanctioning fees before the ride has been cancelled and where the cancellation occurred

**Ride managers** – please make sure you send your proxies to UMECRA Secretary, Janet Sarver, before the Annual Meeting is held. Use this link to submit your list of voting delegates <https://payumecra.com/ridemanagers>

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### Convention Speakers!

We have 2 excellent speakers for this years convention. **Robin Seymour** and **Christina Keim**. **Robin** will present on the benefits of Magnawave therapy for your horse, and **Christina** will be talking about improving the quality of relationship and connection between horse and rider through adherence to classical principles.

### Board Offices Up for Election in January

President: ((a) To be eligible to be elected, a nominee for President: (1/19/19)

1. A current UMECRA Ride Manager or former UMECRA Ride Manager.

2. Who has been a UMECRA Ride Manager during at least three (3) seasons in the past five (5) seasons, or who has been a Delegate in the preceding two (2) years. (1/25/09)

Secretary (must be a current UMECRA member)

Veterinary Representative (must be a DVM and UMECRA member)

Minnesota Director (must be a ride manager from Minnesota)

Wisconsin Director (must be a ride manager from Wisconsin)

Nominations can come from the convention floor as well as in advance.

If you are interested in running for one of these positions, please write a short paragraph about your interest and email it to Janet Sarver,

UMECRA Secretary at [JSarver662@gmail.com](mailto:JSarver662@gmail.com) by January 16, 2024.

## Riders Choice Nominations Needed

It is time to make your nominations for this year's Rider's Choice Award. This is a very special award that honors our equine partners in this sport and is voted on by members at the UMECRA Convention in January.

The guidelines to be considered when nominating a horse for this honor are as follow:

- 1) A horse that has shown superior ability in its division
- 2) A horse that has been a consistent competitor
- 3) A horse that has shown its ability to overcome setbacks
- 4) Any horse, for any reason, the nominator admires, and feels is a superior representative of the "Distance Horse"

Please write up a detailed description of the horse's accomplishments and the reasons why you are nominating the horse for this award. Send them to Janet Sarver, UMECRA Secretary at [JSarver662@gmail.com](mailto:JSarver662@gmail.com). Deadline is Tuesday January 16, 2024.

## Open Rider Representatives Positions

Do you want a voice on the UMECRA Board?  
Are there issues or topics that you are passionate about? Consider being a Rider Representative!

There are 4 Rider Representative positions open for a 2 -year term starting in 2024. This is a great position for those who want to serve as a connection between riders and the Board. There are three board meetings (March, November, January) and discussions over email through the year.

- A Rider Representative must be a 2+ year UMECRA member at least 18 years of age who has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors by individual and family members. They are also delegates to the annual and special meeting(s).

- Ride managers are **not** eligible to be elected as Rider Representatives.

- Interested members need to create a write-up with a description of who they are and why they

would like to represent their fellow distance riders. You can nominate yourself or someone else.

- All nominations need to be sent to Janet Sarver, UMECRA Secretary at [JSarver662@gmail.com](mailto:JSarver662@gmail.com) no later than **December 20, 2023**. These will be published in the January newsletter. Elections will be held online in early January (information to come later).

We have 7 nominations for Rider Representatives! See their bios below....

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- 1) Kim Fosler
  - 2) Crystal Esqueda
  - 3) Diane Merz
  - 4) Debbie Weisbecker
  - 5) Sherry Aune
  - 6) TJ Edwards
  - 7) Wes Elford
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### Kimberly Foster - Rider Representative Nomination

Hi, my name is Kimberly Fosler. I am from Scales Mound; Illinois and I am running for a Rider Representative position. I have been a member of UMECRA since 2012, devoting my riding to my only gelding, CJ. I have experience in CTR, LD, and Endurance rides. Representing UMECRA as a Rider Representative for the past four years, I have learned so much about our bylaws and history of UMECRA. Also, being a good communicator is very important while holding any role on the UMECRA board and I feel I have very good communication skills. Planning Conventions 2020 (Stevens Point, WI) and 2023 (Dubuque, IA), Rider Handbooks, and revision of awards structure have been a couple of tasks I've had since being a member.

Aside from being a Rider Representative, I also hold a Director At Large position on the AHDRA board and the current secretary for DRAW.

I would like to continue to represent our membership and ride managers through the

Rider Representative position.

Kimberly Fosler

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### **Crystal Esqueda - Rider Representative Nomination**

Hello everyone! I am Crystal Esqueda. I started distance riding in 2013 with my first novice ride at Run for The Ridge. It opened a door to a deep love and passion for the sport. I did my first LD at Mosquito Run in 2014 and my first 50 in 2022. I have completed 2085 AERC (1995 with UMECRA) LD miles and 450 AERC and UMECRA Endurance miles. Over 2000 of the UMECRA miles were completed on the same horse and we have done many back-to-back LD's and in 2023 I completed my first multiday with a '50 on Saturday and an LD on Sunday and completed my first LD Challenge with him.

I have been a UMECRA member since 2016. I love the sport of distance riding for a multitude of reasons that are too many to put here. One being because of the focus on the horses wellbeing as the priority and because of this we learn so much about taking care of them. I also love the challenge of taking on whatever the trail throws at you and learning what horses and riders need to complete sound and fit to continue.

One of my favorite parts about distance riding is the support and camaraderie that happens even though we are competing against each other. I just don't miss the drama I experienced in the show world.

I would love to help bridge the gap between ride managers and riders since we all share a common goal of keeping this sport we love alive and strong! I understand there are different points of view, opinions, and approaches on how we make that happen! As your rider representative, I would help riders have a voice at the organization's table so they are represented just as ride managers are.

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### **Diane Thorsen Merz – Rider Representative Nomination**

I live in Nowthen, Minnesota, and am running for Rider Representative. I have been a member of UMECRA for a long time - nearly 20 years - and have competed in distance riding for most of that time until retiring my main horse at the end of 2021. Continuing to stay very active in this sport that I love, I stay involved by volunteering (many of you have seen me as a "resident scribe" in the vet area,) and serving on the MnDRA board. People that know me know that I enjoy being helpful. I especially love seeing new riders become enthusiastic and catch the distance riding fever.

As Rider Representative, I would love to be a voice for the riders of UMECRA. I believe I have the skills and experience to communicate effectively to present ideas and concerns to the board, and to serve as liaison between riders and ride managers.

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### **Debby Weisbecker Rider Representative Nominee**

My name is Debby Weisbecker, and I am asking for your vote for Rider Representative.

A Representative should be approachable, communicate well and have enough experience in the sport to be an effective liaison between riders and the Board. I believe that I have all those qualities. I started as a Novice rider in 2016. Since then, I have continued to grow in the sport, competing successfully in Competitive Trail, Limited Distance and Endurance. I have been learning the basics of crewing through the help of Roberta Harms, one of the most respected riders in UMECRA, who has taught me volumes about all aspects of the sport. I bring a broad base of equestrian knowledge and sport-horse care from years of

eventing, driving, trail and hunter/jumper disciplines.

One thing I try too always be is approachable. I have been told that riders feel comfortable looking towards me when they need help. I am always ready to jump in and if I don't know what to do, I find someone who does. I am open-minded and objective and will provide an inviting environment for riders to share their input and concerns. Outside of the horse world, my work requires me to collaborate with other departments, develop best-in-practice strategies, and help lead a small team with proven success. In other words, I love to talk to different people and personalities and know how to bring them together to solve problems and work effectively as a team. That experience will help make me an effective liaison between riders and the Board.

I have been assisted by so many wonderful people in the UMECRA community and I would love to give back to the sport by being a resource for others and making our sport even better. I believe that as I Rider Representative, I can do exactly that.

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### **Sherry Aune**

#### Rider Representative Nomination

Hi, my name is Sherry Aune and I would be honored to be a Rider Representative for UMECRA. I live in Lake Geneva, WI and have ridden horses all my life. I've always enjoyed spending the day in the saddle trail riding and exploring the great outdoors. As a kid, I was in 4-H horse (pony) project. Later, after I purchased my own horse, I trail rode and participated in barrel racing and speed events. I moved on to pleasure riding classes and halter classes. I started breeding my mare(s) and have had a handful of foals over the last 30 years. Finally, in 2006, I had my first opportunity to participate in an endurance ride. It was Colorama. I came knowing nothing about the sport and left knowing I had found exactly what I was looking for.

I now have 17 years distance riding experience, traveling near and far camping and competing with the horses. I would like to be a UMECRA rider representative to give back to the sport I have a passion for and to help people along in their journey of distance riding. I also have the experience of caring for my horses at my home since 1988. Whether you are starting a 2 year old or a 20 year old for distance riding, our sport has a place for you. Whether you like to go fast or slow, our sport has a place for you. I'm currently helping my granddaughter get started in distance riding and I love seeing the kids riding. Given the opportunity, I look forward to making everyone feel welcome and to helping them learn more about distance riding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sherry Aune

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### **TJ Edwards**

#### Rider Representative Nomination

T. J. Edwards would like to nominate himself for the position of Rider Representative on the UMECRA Board of Directors.

T. J. started distance riding in 2000 and became a UMECRA member in 2003. Since that time T. J. has ridden over 2600 endurance miles and over 7000 Limited Distance miles. He has had one horse and one mule that were Decade Team award winners.

T. J. was one of the first UMECRA mentors and was on the mentor list for about five years. He has mentored several new riders and additionally brought several riders into the sport.

T. J. was very involved in putting on the Northern Highland Ride the two years it was scheduled to be in the Spooner, WI area. (The second year it was cancelled due to very heavy rains.) He also has been a volunteer at many of the DRAW and MnDRA rides which he has attended. Frequently he can be seen at rides cleaning horse apples from the roads in the campgrounds!

T. J. strongly believes that there needs to be high standards for both riders and horses and that UMECRA has become very top heavy when it comes to awards. He is also concerned with keeping ride costs down so that riders can afford to participate in more rides. This has been reflected by low ride attendance the past three years.

Another concern that T. J. has is how to involve more young people in the sports of distance riding. This is a lifetime sport but it is also one that requires dedication, time and a fair amount of money. Youth are the future of our sport and getting them involved and keeping them involved is a significant challenge.

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**Dr Wesley Elford - Rider Representative Nomination**

My name is Dr. Wesley Elford and I am running to continue my position as Rider Rep on the Board of Directors of UMECRA. I have been an active member of UMECRA since 1984. I have vetted many rides and have competed in both competitive and endurance rides. I understand the sport of distance riding both as a veterinarian and a rider.

I presently sit on AERC's Welfare of the Horse Committee. I sat on the Veterinary Committee from the 1990's till 2023 during which time I was privileged to help rewrite the Guidelines for Control Veterinarians and Treatment Veterinarians Handbook. I feel that I have a complete understanding of the sport of Endurance and a passion for the welfare of the horse.

I do know that UMECRA is a rider manager's organization, and that the rider must have a solid representation on the Board of Directors. I feel that I can represent riders interests well because of my understanding of UMECRA and AERC as governing organizations and the sport of endurance as a whole due to my experience in competing as a rider.

I would appreciate your vote.

Wesley G. Elford DVM

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**AWARDS!**

Are you getting a UMECRA award but not able to attend Convention? Please ask a friend to pick up your award for you! Awards are not mailed!

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**Don't forget to  
renew your  
UMECRA  
membership for  
2024!**

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**Robin Schadt - Nomination for UMECRA President:**

Please let me preface this mini bio by stating that I am out of my comfort zone when speaking about myself. However, let's go! I have served as points keeper since 2011. Recently I was elected to the Board of Directors to serve as a Director at Large.

During the 2023 season I was fortunate to be able to attend at least one ride in each of our member states that are represented on the Board. I also attended the ride in Iowa. North Dakota was the only UMECRA state that I was unable to attend this season. Kankakee River Ride was a new Illinois ride on the schedule, and the first independent ride I co-managed. I have co-managed the AHDRA Endure ride for about seven years prior to this year. In addition

to traveling to most of the UMECRA sub-regions, I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel outside the AERC Midwest region as well. The many different regions offer unique challenges and experiences which I feel are beneficial to my growth as an endurance rider and endurance ride manager.

During the early years of my term as points keeper, I made it a priority to organize and centralize the horse and rider mileage histories for our members. The monumental task was completed with the help of fellow UMECRA members about eight years ago.

As some of you may know, my passion is riding the longer distances, most of all the 100-mile rides. My first ride was a 12.5 novice ride in 2007 with my quarter horse mare, Princess. My first competitive ride completion was the 2008 Rock River Charity ride, with Maruf. My first endurance ride completion was the 2010 Glacier Trail ride with Maruf. My first 100-mile start was the 2010 Tevis at which I was pulled. My first 100-mile completion was my third attempt at the 100-mile distance where I finished top 10 with Katie. I have since completed 10 rides at the 100-mile distance. Hundred-mile rides sure do build character and most of all develop a strong bond with your horse and a sincere appreciation for your crew.

I was honored to be recognized as the AHDRA's Inaugural Outstanding Mentor award for the 2011 season. I very much enjoy introducing our sport to new riders as it makes my heart warm to watch their bond grow with their horses. I have a passion for our sport of endurance and feel that I can contribute to UMECRA in the capacity of President. Thank you for taking the time to read,

Robin

children, and now have competed every year from 2009-present. I have ridden in competitive, LD and endurance riding events and enjoy supporting new riders and volunteering. I have also been a ride manager for three rides over the past four years. I have served as the current UMECRA Secretary since 2020. In this role I have attended all board meetings, taken minutes, assisted with the annual convention, and communicated with members via social media. I would like to continue in this position so I can give back to this sport that has given me so much over the years.

Thank you.

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### **Janet Sarver – Nomination for Secretary**

My name is Janet Sarver and I would like to be re-elected to the office of UMECRA Secretary. I started riding competitive rides in 1993-1995 as a college student, took a break to raise my



For Office Use Only:

Date Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_

Chk # or Cash (\$) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

DB entered? \_\_\_\_\_

Date deposited \_\_\_\_\_

# UMECRA



**PERSEVERE**

## UPPER MIDWEST ENDURANCE AND COMPETITIVE RIDE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership year: \_\_\_\_\_

**SELECT ONE:**

RENEWAL

NEW MEMBERSHIP

**SELECT MEMBERSHIP TYPE:**

Family \$45

Single \$35

Junior \$10

**SELECT MEDIA PREFERENCE:**

Electronic Newsletter - \$0

Mailed Newsletter - \$10

Electronic Ride Book - \$0

Mailed Ride Book - \$10

Ride Book is available for free by downloading the PDF file at [www.umecra.com](http://www.umecra.com) on the schedule page

\*Family memberships shall consist of one or more related, or coupled as significant other, adults, and/or children of such adults who are less than 18 years of age, all of whom reside in the same household. Please include all names of eligible family members below.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY and LEGIBLY!**

AERC MEMBER NUMBER(s) (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

AERC HORSE NUMBER(s) (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

UMECRA MEMBERSHIP NUMBER(S): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If you do NOT want your name and contact info in the membership book, check this box:

Please mail completed form along with check made out to UMECRA to:

Deb Moe – Treasurer  
2632 County Road G  
Emerald, WI 54013



**UMECRA 2023 Convention Schedule and Registration**  
**Friday, January 19 - Sunday, January 21, 2023**  
**Terrace Bay Hotel**

**7124 P Rd, Gladstone, MI 49837**

**Friday, January 19**

3:00 pm - Registration Opens (Near bar area in the main ballroom)

6:30 pm - Registration Closes for the night

6:30 pm - AHDRA Meet & Greet w/ Appetizers (main ballroom), followed by Social Hour and Games (open to everyone)

**Saturday, January 20**

7:00 am – UMECRA Board Meeting (Location TBD)

9:00 am – Robin Seymour “MagnaWave PEMF (Pulsed Electro-Magnetic Field) Use in Horses and More” Presentation (Main Ballroom)

10:15 am – 15-minute Break

10:30 am – Virtual Presentation in Main Ballroom by Christina Keim

12:00 Noon – Lunch Break

1:15 pm to 4:15 pm – UMECRA Annual Meeting

5:00-6:00 pm – Happy Hour and Socializing

6:00 pm – Dinner in Main Ballroom

Approx 7:00 pm – UMECRA Awards followed by Social Hour

**Sunday, January 21**

7:30 – 10:00 am – AHDRA Annual Meeting

**Banquet Buffet Reservations:**

Buffet includes: Beef Tenderloin, Herb Roasted Chicken, Tavern Mac N Cheese, Mixed Green Salad, Garlic Parmesan Green Beans and Assorted Dessert Bar

Meal Selection	Qty	Subtotal	Names
# Adult Meals (\$34)			
# Child Meals (ages 4-12) \$16			

**Dinner Buffet Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**Children 3 and younger are free for the dinner buffet.**

**BOXED LUNCHESES for Saturday - \$22/each** includes: Sandwich or Salad from below, soda or bottled water, house made vegetable chips, chef’s choice dessert.

Meal Selection	Qty	Subtotal	Names
Hot Beef Sandwich			
Chicken Casaer Salad			

**Box Lunch Total** \_\_\_\_\_

- Hot beef sandwich – shaved sirloin, pepper jack cheese, sauteed onions on a ciabatta roll
- Chicken Casaer Salad – chopped romaine, asiago cheese, tomato, crouton, Caesar dressing, chili flakes

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**Attending convention but not attending the banquet? Members not purchasing a banquet meal and who attend the morning talk and/or afternoon meeting will be assessed a \$10/member meeting fee to help cover venue expenses.**

Convention Only	Qty	Subtotal	Names

**Total of Dinner, Box Lunch, Convention Fees**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**RESERVATIONS ARE DUE BY JANUARY 10TH - refunds will not be given and late meals requests will not be accepted**

**Electronic registration and payment available on <https://payumecra.com/fees>**

**Paying by check? Please mail this form with a check made out to UMECRA to:**

UMECRA c/o Rebecca K. Grams  
 1055 N. Kings Hwy Luther, MI 49656  
 Call: 616 430 7804 or Email: [beckeg@aol.com](mailto:beckeg@aol.com)

UMECRA Newsletter  
 c/o Peggy Pasillas  
 9928 Rich Valley Blvd  
 Inver Grove Hgts, MN 55077  
[www.umecra.com](http://www.umecra.com)

Deadline for Next Newsletter:  
 10<sup>th</sup> of each month  
 Send news to:  
[umecranews@gmail.com](mailto:umecranews@gmail.com)



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