

Biography – Danielle Piascik



Hello everybody! My name is Danielle Piascik, I am the owner of Brookside Friesians. I am very honored to have been nominated as a candidate for this year's Board of Directors election. I look forward to sharing my experience and Friesian story through the election process, but also look forward to hearing about yours.

My journey with horses started when I was 8 years old when my mother asked if we wanted to start taking formal lessons. What little girl wouldn't?! Since then, I was fortunate

enough to have grown up with horses, as my own two children now do. I competed locally until high school. In 2006 when I met my husband, we fell in love with the Friesian breed and never looked back! Today, our family includes a herd of beautiful black pearls at our home farm. Our focus is to breed top quality, KFPS friesians in keeping with the integrity of the breed. I also enjoy competing in the driving ring during the show season with our stallions!

I graduated from Bay Path University with a degree in Forensic Psychology. After working in the field for a few years, I changed careers to help my family run our construction



company. Since that time, we have taken our family farm to a running business, expanding to include a stallion station and breeding facility. Coming from a family run business as well as running our own business, I have a deep understanding of the commitment and hard work it takes to make an organization run successfully.



I encourage all members to ask questions and share their views, comments and concerns! Reach out, I would love to talk with you! I can always be reached on my cell phone (413) 519-1165, by email brooksidefriesians@yahoo.com or on Social Media.

2022 Board of Directors Election Questions

- *Please describe your credentials which would help you to be an effective FHANA board member. Explain how these credentials have aided your past participation in FHANA and its related organizations (committees and chapters) and events.*

Since becoming a Friesian owner, I have been an active member of both of my local chapters for many years. Since 2018, I have served in various positions on the chapter Board. Currently I am serving my second term as President for North East Friesian Horse Club. I also currently serve as Chairperson for the FHANA AGM committee, am a member of the Sponsorship & Events Committee, member of the Stallion committee, representative of NEFHC for the FMC committee, as well as a mentor for new members with FHANA's mentorship program. During the 2020 AGM, I was honored with being awarded the 2019 Fenway Foundation's Charitable Activities Award.



In 2018, I was responsible for organizing the inspection for New England on behalf of the chapter. I have also exhibited at the MA Equine Affaire for many years. The last few years we have hosted an aisle exclusively to showcase various Friesian breeders, farms and trainers from all over New England. This year we also represented FHANA during Equine Affaire by hosting the

FHANA booth and organizing four breed demos as well as Meet & Greets with the Friesian breed, in addition to two breed stalls in the Breed Pavilion. In the beginning of the year, we also attended the Michiana Friesian Sale in Indiana where we were able to participate alongside other Approved stallions in the KFPS Stallion Demonstration and host the FHANA information table. Bringing information to Friesian owners who do not participate in technology is something I feel very passionately about, especially after having the opportunity to meet many owners during the Michiana event and speaking with them about their desire to participate with FHANA but do not have the access readily available.

Being able to participate in these types of events has afforded me the opportunity to meet Friesian owners, talk to them about their horses and experiences, but also hear from them in a more personal way some of the things they are looking for from their FHANA membership and from the organization.

Alongside attending events with our Friesians, my husband Justin and I own and operate Brookside Friesians LLC. What started out as just the two of us has grown to include a team of more than 10. From trainers, Junior Riders, Amateur riders, marketing and breeding team members, we have grown our Friesian family. Leading and working with a team, as well as being able to communicate effectively with a variety of personalities and skillsets, is a strength I plan to incorporate into my work with FHANA.

• Describe three initiatives you would like to see FHANA accomplish during your term? Describe how you would recommend they be accomplished?

Despite the very trying years of Covid, I believe FHANA and its committees have accomplished many things, despite the need to overcome challenges the last few years. But we can always do better and improve upon things. The first thing I would like to help make happen would be to find a way to work effectively with the KFPS to make inspections available virtually, when in situations like the last two inspections, it has been impossible to hold an inspection in person. While it is outside our control with travel restrictions, many breeders and owners have found themselves in a position questioning whether they can continue on in the next breeding season or if they should hold onto their foals they would of otherwise found homes for until they are 3 years old. With the increase of technology all over the world, and finding creating ways to stay in contact with each other when it was otherwise restricted in person, I believe it is time to find another way of doing things when needed. Whether it be due to a pandemic, or geographical limitations, by creating a new path for our horses to be inspected when an in person approach is not available, would increase revenue as well as keep the quality of the Friesian breed in the US and Canada intact. So much hard work goes into breeding and raising the Friesian horse, some creativity and implementation of the ever-increasing technology available to us could ensure all breeders needs are met.

My second initiative is to increase the communication and transparency of FHANA. The Board is here for the members and that should be reflective in the communication members receive from their leadership. Members should feel as though their concerns have been heard, acknowledged and understood, but also receive feedback to their concerns or questions in a timely manner. Communication should be brought to the members, so they know what is going on with their organization.

Lastly, I would like to help get one of the newest committees off the ground and up and running to its fullest potential. I am currently a member of the Sponsorship & Events Committee and would like to see that committee gain more members who are able to offer their skills and ideas so that as a committee we can be available to our members. The objective to the Committee is to be able to support our members.

• What current membership benefits do you feel need to be improved, and what could be added to make FHANA more attractive to past members, existing members, or new members?

I would like to see an option implemented for members to make monthly or bimonthly payments in the beginning of the year for membership fees to relieve some of the financial burden for those finding it difficult to renew their membership in full after the holidays.

For new members, I believe it would be beneficial to create a user video that could be emailed to new members on how to actively use the portal, what information can be found within the portal, and what the FHANA website has to offer. This is something the mentors within FHANA's mentorship program could offer in their initial contact with new members as a tool to

become acquainted with the website. Many times, I have heard from members they don't know where to find information or how to use the portal to get the information they need when trying to breed.

I believe we need to take a look at membership renewals from the last few years and create a survey for those who have not renewed. By offering a survey, it gives people who wish to participate a chance to voice their feedback to the organization and experience why they choose not to renew their membership. In general, members do not renew with an organization for a reason. If we can identify key reasons for the loss of their membership, we could have a direction to look towards and see if there is something, we as an organization can improve upon to retain and gain members.

Lastly, I believe we should be looking for more creative ways to get the membership involved and active. The Virtual Show presented last year during the height of Covid presented members with a way to share their horses with the membership as well as have some fun doing it. More events like these would get the membership involved with each other as well as more acquainted with each other from one side of the country to the other.

• In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing FHANA going forward, and how would you address these issues as a Board member?

In my opinion, member retention and growth are an important issue. A part of member retention is creating a sense of community, which is something I believe as an organization based on members, we need to continually be mindful of. As a community, we aren't all ever going to agree on everything, and that is ok, it is important even! A mix of personalities and viewpoints is vital in order to represent the needs of the whole. But we need to be able to create a community where members can feel free to express their opinions, their points of view, and feel they are being HEARD by their leadership they elected. We all come from different walks of life, we have different experiences to share, we all have something to contribute to the group, so we need to be able to hear each other, understand someone else is not going to think the same way as the next person, and from there be able to have open, respectful, constructive communication so we can work together to better FHANA, for everyone.

