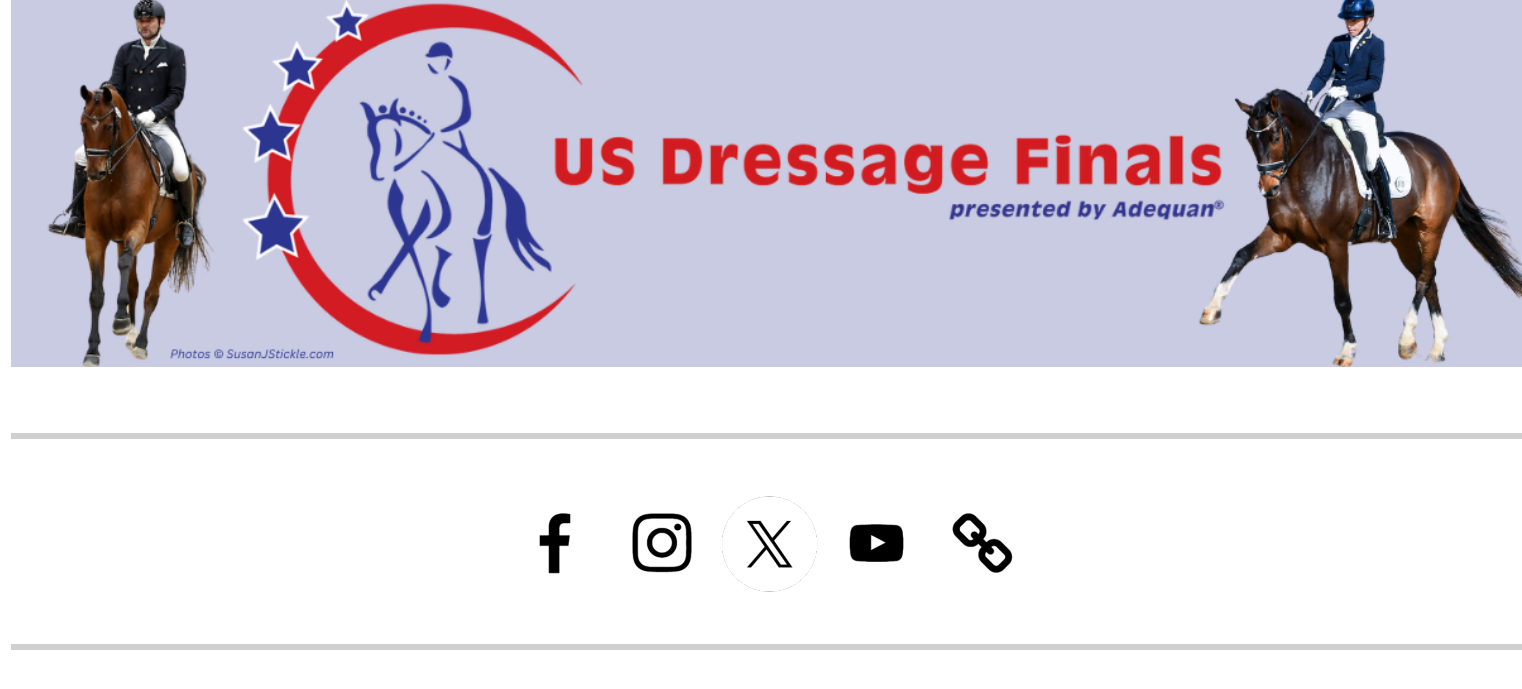
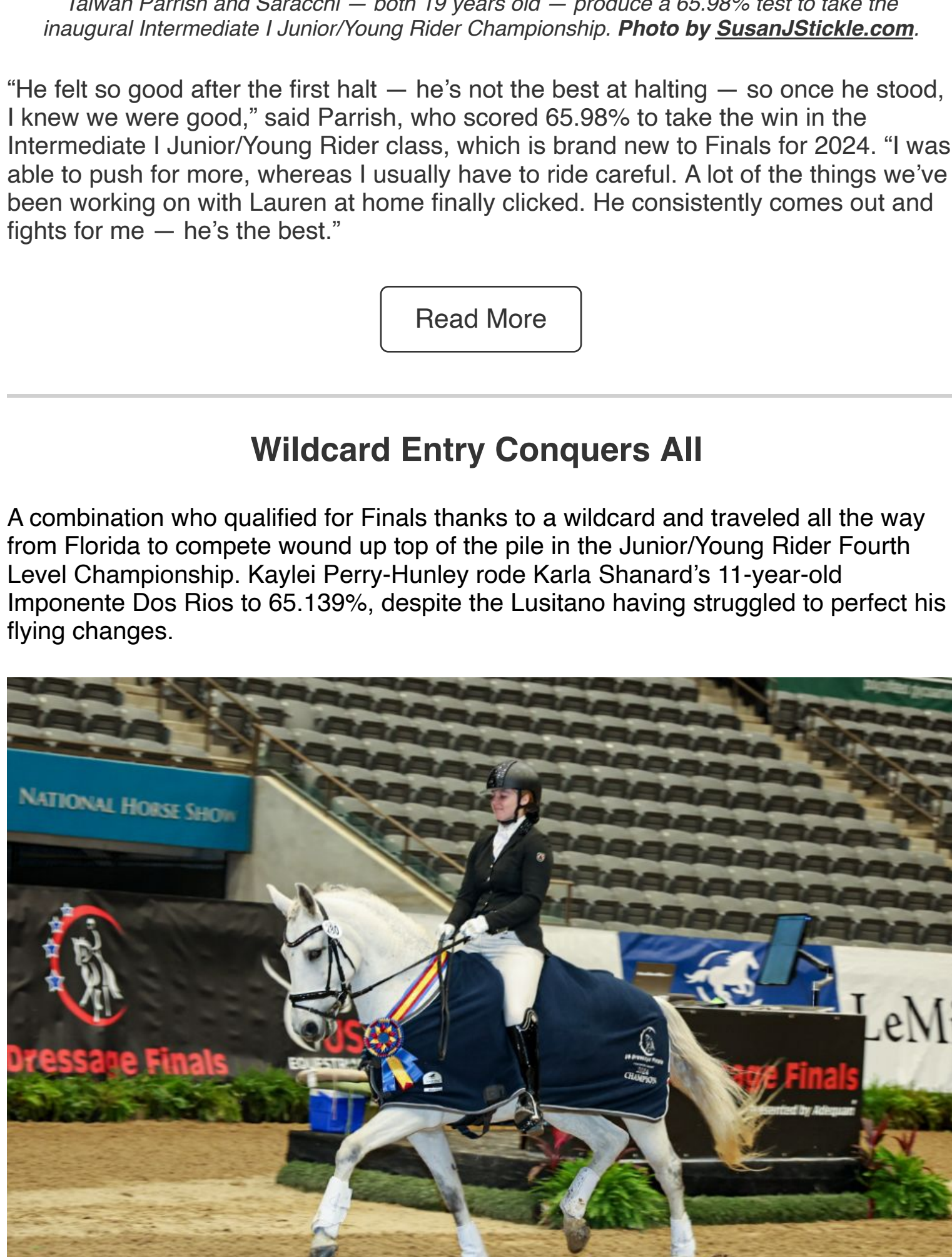


A Complex Journey Bears Fruit on Final Day of 2024 US Dressage Finals Presented by Adequan®

November 11, 2024 — Lexington, KY — Taiwan Parrish's relationship with Lauren Chumley's quirky 19-year-old Sandro Hit gelding Saracchi is a complex one. But the pieces of the partnership all fitted into place in the very last class of the last day of the 2024 US Dressage Finals presented by Adequan® on Sunday, November 10, at the Kentucky Horse Park.



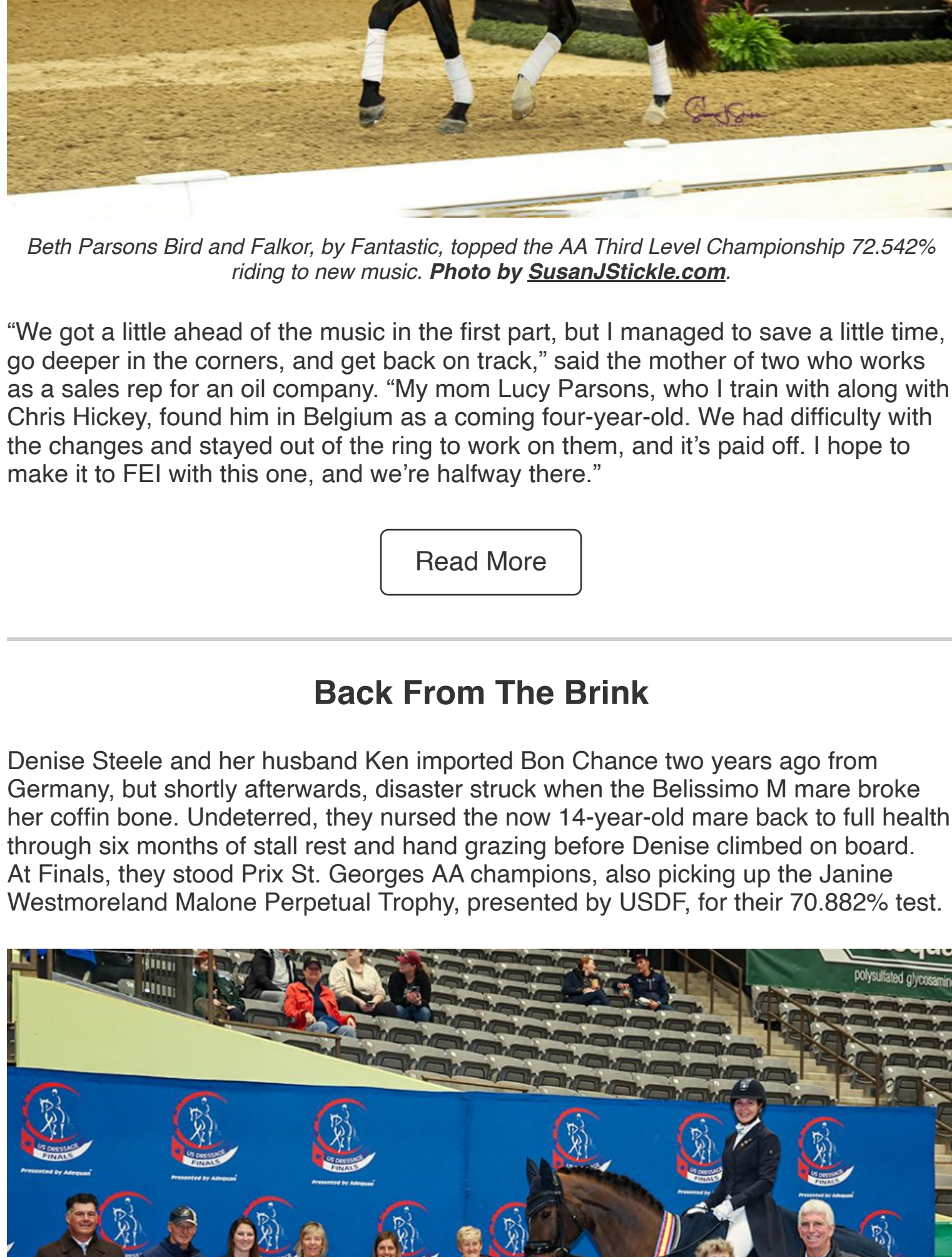
Taiwan Parrish and Saracchi — both 19 years old — produce a 65.98% test to take the inaugural Intermediate I Junior/Young Rider Championship with 65.139%. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"He felt so good after the first halt — he's not the best at halting — so once he stood, I knew we were good," said Parrish, who scored 65.98% to take the win in the Intermediate I Junior/Young Rider class, which is brand new to Finals for 2024. "I was able to push for more, whereas I usually have to ride careful. A lot of the things we've been working on with Lauren at home finally clicked. He consistently comes out and fights for me — he's the best."

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Wildcard Entry Conquers All

A combination who qualified for Finals thanks to a wildcard and traveled all the way from Florida to compete wound up top of the pile in the Junior/Young Rider Fourth Level Championship. Kaylei Perry-Hunley rode Karla Shanard's 11-year-old Imponente Dos Rios to 65.139%, despite the Lusitano having struggled to perfect his flying changes.



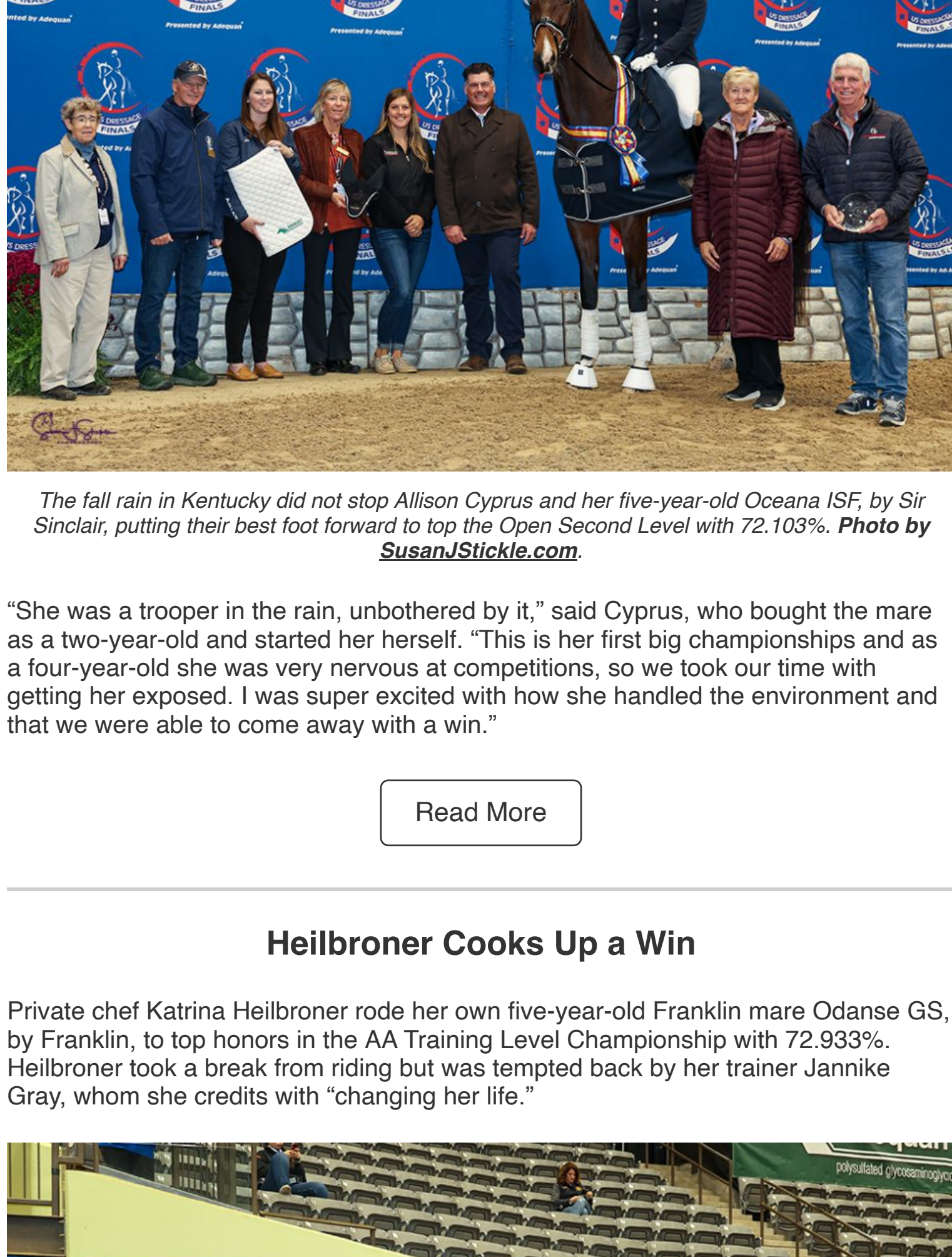
Wildcard entrant Kaylei Perry-Hunley triumphed with the Lusitano Imponente Dos to head up the Fourth Level Junior/Young Rider Championship with 65.139%. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"He really came up and showed out for me," said 20-year-old nursing student Perry-Hunley. "He's a really special horse who is in his first year competing. He was imported and gelded when he was nine, so he got started late, but Karla looked for a year for a horse all up and down the east coast and then found him in Ocala, Florida, at the end of the road. She wanted something that she felt safe on but could also do something fancier. He's a bit of an underdog story."

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A Fantastic New Freestyle

Beth Parsons Bird was another rider to have faced challenges establishing the flying changes and whose patience is now paying dividends. She and Falkor, her nine-year-old gelding by Fantastic, danced to new freestyle music from Amanda Braun in the AA Third Level Championship and nailed it with 72.542%.



Beth Parsons Bird and Falkor, by Fantastic, topped the AA Third Level Championship 72.542% riding to new music. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"We got a little ahead of the music in the first part, but I managed to save a little time, go deeper in the corners, and get back on track," said the mother of two who works as a sales rep for an oil company. "My mom Lucy Parsons, who I train with along with Chris Hickey, found him in Belgium as a coming four-year-old. We had difficulty with the changes and stayed out of the ring to work on them, and it's paid off. I hope to make it to FEI with this one, and we're halfway there."

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Back From The Brink

Denise Steele and her husband Ken imported Bon Chance two years ago from Germany, but shortly afterwards, disaster struck when the Bellissimo M mare broke her coffin bone. Undeterred, they nursed the now 14-year-old mare back to full health through six months of stall rest and hand grazing before Denise climbed on board. At Finals, they stood Prix St. Georges AA champions, also picking up the Janine Westmoreland Malone Perpetual Trophy, presented by USDF, for their 70.882% test.



Despite breaking her coffin bone just after import two years ago, the Bellissimo M daughter Bon Chance stepped up to hand the AA Prix St. Georges Championship to Denise Steele. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"It was probably my best ride ever on her," enthused retiree Steele. "Everything felt super smooth. We call her 'Honey Badger' because nothing fazes her. I can take her in the hills on 800 acres and over bridges; I can do anything with her. She's the most bombproof horse I've ever sat on in my life, but in the arena, she knows her job."

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Flipping The Script

Allison Cyprus flipped the script on her trainer Jeremy Steinberg, taking the winner's blanket in the Open Second Level class and relegating Steinberg and Henry to the reserve spot, the reverse of the placings in the First Level Championship. Cyprus rode her own five-year-old Oceana ISF, a Sir Sinclair mare bred by Iron Spring Farm, to 72.103%. After three days of autumn sun in Lexington, Sunday brought some wintry conditions to the outdoor rings.



The fall rain in Kentucky did not stop Allison Cyprus and her five-year-old Oceana ISF, by Sir Sinclair, putting their best foot forward to top the Open Second Level with 72.103%. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"She was a trooper in the rain, unbothered by it," said Cyprus, who bought the mare as a two-year-old and started her herself. "This is her first big championships and as a four-year-old she was very nervous at competitions, so we took our time with getting her exposed. I was super excited with how she handled the environment and that we were able to come away with a win."

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Heilbronner Cooks Up a Win

Private chef Katrina Heilbronner rode her own five-year-old Franklin mare Odanse GS, by Franklin, to top honors in the AA Training Level Championship with 72.933%. Heilbronner took a break from riding but was tempted back by her trainer Jannike Gray, whom she credits with "changing her life."



Katrina Heilbronner, who works as a private chef, led the AA Training Level Championship on the Franklin daughter Odanse GS with 72.933%. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"If it wasn't for Jannike I would never have bought this fun horse," said Heilbronner, who was the reserve champion in the AA First Level class and also has help from Heather Mason. "I bought her sight unseen from Holland a year-and-a-half ago because I couldn't stop thinking about her. She had maybe 10 rides under saddle."

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Mason Rises to the Challenge

Heather Mason saved it until the afternoon of the final day of the competition to etch her name at the top of the leaderboard, a place very familiar to her over the past few years at Finals. Her 72.842% on the seven-year-old gelding Manuscript SCF clinched the Fourth Level Freestyle Open, despite some technical music issues.

Heather Mason piloted the high-achieving Jazz gelding Manuscript SCF to 72.842% and the top spot in the Fourth Level Freestyle Open Championship. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"It was incredibly challenging to count changes when the music was doing strange things, but he was good about it," said Mason, who had a host of students competing at Finals. "He has a lot of character and a mind of his own — he's by Jazz which says it all — but he likes to show off."

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A Huge Winning Margin

Former hunter/jumper rider Lark Heckman and her own nine-year-old gelding Franziskus, made their Finals debut in the Training Level Junior/Young Rider class and vanquished the opposition, leading the class by almost 5%. They were awarded 13% of the three judges for their harmonious test which garnered 73.467%, with one judge awarding 77%.

The 16-year-old Lark Heckman, a recent convert to dressage, led the Training Level Junior/Young Rider Championship on Franziskus, by Franziskus. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"I've only been riding him since the end of February," said the home-schooled 16-year-old who trains with Nicky Buckingham. "Mom got a call at midnight, and we drove from home in Ocala all the way to Wellington to try him. "He was lazy then, but he's sparked up and has a lovely personality."

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“The Air Feels Different Here”

Bailey Armbrecht topped the Second Level Jr/YR Championship by a hair's breadth. She finished on 66.19% riding Night'n Dale, just 0.07 percentage points ahead of the reserve Hannah Catsulis on Hylke Van De Klei.

Bailey Armbrecht, 14, topped the Second Level Jr/YR Championship riding Night'n Dale, by Everdale, to 66.19%. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"This is my first time winning anything like this," said the 14-year-old who trains with her mom Jennifer Albrecht and Tyra Vernon. "She's only six so we're just getting started. It's really exciting for the future."

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Field Ornament to Champion

A pony who spent the first eight years of her life in a field came to the fore in the First Level Freestyle dancing to a Debbie Marriott soundtrack of music from The Piano Guys and a 70.759% victory under Susan Morrison. Ryann, Kathy Mathers' 11-year-old Weser-Ems mare, was the first choice of all three judges and the only one to crack 70% in the class.

The 14-hand Ryann delivers a 70.759% Finals win for retired math teacher Susan Morrison in the First Level Freestyle. **Photo by SusanJStickle.com.**

"It was a lot of fun, and I'm elated," said Morrison, a recently retired math teacher of 34 years who trains with Donna Gatchell in Virginia. "Ryann is spicy and excitable and can be a bit looky until she decompresses; she likes the rider to tell her everything is okay. She's an awesome pony, and we've really just started showing her the last couple of years. This is a fun hobby."

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Additional Special Award Winners

Lloyd Landkamer Perpetual Trophy
The Lloyd Landkamer Perpetual Trophy is given to the FEI highest scoring mare of the competition, Bon Chance 8, a 14-year-old mare by Bellissimo M ridden by Denise Steele and owned by Kenneth Steele.

Verne Batchelder Perpetual Trophy
The Verne Batchelder Memorial Trophy, presented by River House Hanoverians to the FEI Highest Scoring U.S.-bred Horse, was awarded to Franzsis HSR, an eight-year-old gelding by Franziskus ridden and owned by Kathryn Fleming-Kuhn and bred by Anita Nardine.

Top Hat Perpetual Trophy
The Top Hat Perpetual Trophy, presented by Janet Foy, went to the Highest Freestyle and non-Freestyle average score at the same level. Opportunity Knocks, a five-year-old gelding by Spielberg ridden by Brittany Burson and owned by Patricia Joy, was given the award.

Regions Cup
The Regions Cup Perpetual Plaque and winner of the Le Mieux/US Dressage Finals Regions Cup was Region 3, who had an average score of 69.026%.

Vying with competitors from across the country for bragging rights for their respective USDF Regions, the top four scoring riders in designated divisions competed on regional teams for the Le Mieux/US Dressage Finals Regions Cup plaque.

CHAMPION: Region 3, 69.026%
Amber Gipp and San Sebastián, 71.800%
Sarah Hurst and Final Prince HAF 68.532%
Lark Heckman and Franzissimo, 73.467%
Phyllis Sumner and Soprano 9, 62.304%

RESERVE CHAMPION: Region 2, 68.848%
Erin Miller and Ocean, 72.200%
Eleanor Thomas and Impression Texel, 60.292%
Faith Green and Love Day, 70.509%
Ali Potasky and Inxs, 72.391%

THIRD PLACE: Region 1, 68.708%
Allison Cyprus and Oceana ISF, 72.917%
Beth Parsons Bird and Falkor, 68.958%
Violet Gutberlet and SWS Encino, 64.133%
Lauren Spriesser and C. Cadeau, 68.824%

Out and About at Finals

Behind-the-scenes photos by Chelsey Burris.

Sunday's classes concluded competition at the 2024 US Dressage Finals presented by Adequan®. Catch up with all the action via the [USDF Facebook page](#), the [US Dressage Finals website](#), and [USEF Network](#). Full results can be found on [www.horsheshowoffice.com](#). The dates for the 2025 US Dressage Finals will be announced shortly.

Along with presenting sponsor Adequan®, the US Dressage Finals is supported by Great American Insurance Group, SmartPak® Equine, Platinum Performance, and LeMieux. Contributing sponsors include CryoStride, Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, Premier Equestrian, Sterling Thompson Equine, and Uvex.

By Alice Collins for Jump Media/US Dressage Finals

About USDF

Founded in 1973, the United States Dressage Federation is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to education, recognition of achievement, and promotion of dressage. For more information about USDF membership or programs, visit [www.usdf.org](#), email [usdressage@usdf.org](#), or call 859-971-2277.

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