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WEXFORD
TRAINING

Wexford Training

Dear Friends,

I didn't quite get this done in time to send before leaving for Nebraska - so here you go December's newsletter!

I had a lovely week of rest and relaxation with the entire family at my parent's place in Elkhorn, Nebraska over the holidays. I feel rejuvenated and ready for a great 2007. Pizano is showing signs of improvement so I am hopeful and just watching as each day goes by. I hope your Christmas was merry and bright and that you have a splendid year in 2007!

Calendar updates

- Saturday, January 6
Severn, MD

Clinic: Individual clinic slots for horse and rider, open topics

contact: Sarah Wengerut at 410-977-7835 or Sarah@kwlandscaping.com

- Saturday, January 13
Palm City, FL

Riding Club Clinic: Sorry but this one is cancelled due to the risk of the EHV-1 virus. It is not advisable for local horses to travel just yet, so hopefully we can get Gretchen for a later date.

- Sunday, January 14
Brooksville, FL

Private lesson day: Individual slots available for lessons.

Contact: Paige Cool at 352-754-1759 or viking13@bellsouth.net

- Sunday, January 21
Daytona, FL

Private lesson day: Individual slots available for lessons.

Contact: June Hannabass at 386-451-0884 or saddle-creekstable@yahoo.com

- Sunday, January 28
Sarasota, FL

Private lesson day: Individual slots available for lessons, shared lesson time also available.

Contact: Tabitha at 941-232-4458

- Sunday, February 4
Daytona, FL

Clinic: Groundwork basics and riding in balance

Contact: June Hannabass at 386-451-0884 or saddle-creekstable@yahoo.com

- Saturday, February 17
Baltimore, MD

Riding clinic with individual slots for each rider

Contact: Sarah Wengerut at 410-977-7835

Clinics in the works

- Myakka City, FL

Private lesson or shared lesson day possibly on Sunday, February 11.

If you are interested, please contact Chris Koch at 941-917-5092 or christine-koch@smh.com

- Heber, UT

Riding clinic from Friday, June 15 through Sunday, June 17. Private lessons near Ogden on Monday, June 18 and Tuesday, June 19.

Contact: Sandy Smith at 801-560-2661 or sandra.smith@nurs.utah.edu

News updates

Hurricane EHV-1

Well I thought we had escaped hurricanes this season in Florida until suddenly in December EHV-1 hit the horse world smack in the middle of Wellington. What this "hurricane" lacked in wind and rain it made up for in rumors and misinformation. What made me think of this Equine Herpes Virus outbreak as a hurricane was the astounding psychologi-

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cal impact it has had on horse people. Much like a hurricane, this virus has brought out the best and the worst in people all around South Florida. I don't think details are important since we have all been through one type of natural disaster or another. Suffice to say that fear and authority have been running rampant.

This is not to down play the seriousness of the situation. Just like a hurricane, this virus poses a very real and serious threat. Farriers, breeders, barn workers, barn owners, show venues and trainers, myself included, have all but shut down for business. The only real precaution people can take at this time is to confine horses to their properties and limit people traveling on and off horse properties. People who must travel need to take every precaution to sanitize between facilities. The one thing that we can all do is work to contain the virus by being responsible about where we go and how we can prevent the spread. We can inform our friends and neighbors without causing additional panic or fear by simply making sure that any information we share is actual fact and not just what the last person said.

So let's get to the facts

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Division of Animal Industry is the official reporting agency for this and any other viruses. You can access official state reports at www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai/ - scroll down to "announcements".

Michael Short, the Department of Agriculture veterinarian sends out weekly updates to all licensed veterinarians listing how many confirmed cases have been reported, how many have resulted in deaths and which properties are under state mandated quarantine. Check with your vet for the most recent updates.

According to local gossip and a few emails the confirmed cases have been up as high as 29. According to the Department of Agriculture report as of January 1, there have been 12 confirmed cases with 6 resulting in death. There are currently 10 state quarantined properties. The original case was traced back to a horse that was imported from Europe, went through a quarantine barn in New York and was then shipped on a transport to Florida with several other horses. (How did it get through the first quarantine is MY question!)

Contrary to many of the emails I have received, the state border of Florida has never been closed to horse travel.

What to do?

- Seek out official information from the state. Yes, they do care and all the vets are required to report new cases.
- Talk to your veterinarian directly for additional official information.
- Check your vaccination records. The EHV-1 virus is a strain of a herpes virus that is associated with Rhinopneumonitis. Most people give the Rhino vaccine regularly as it is part of the "5 way" inoculation. If your horse received its regular vaccine in the past 90 days then you are in the best case scenario. If it has been longer than that, then contact your vet to discuss a booster. There are pro's and con's to giving boosters during an outbreak that you will need to consider.
- If you are on the holistic path and do not vaccinate (or even if you do), then boosting the immune system is an excellent preventative measure. Garlic and Vitamin C are readily available. For serious immune boosts, contact my friend Jeffra Sinclair of JS Essential Therapies for a variety of products and therapies. She is well versed in alternative solutions and can be reached at 352-408-2604.
- Take your horse's temperature as often as you think necessary. The very first symptom is a fever, which is followed by either respiratory problems and/or neurological symptoms. If your horse's temperature is over 101.2 F then contact your vet.
- The virus has a 21 day maximum incubation period, so take extra precautions for at least 3 weeks if there is a case in your area.

Hopefully this virus will remain contained and 3 weeks will finally pass without any new cases. We can only hope and in the meantime stay informed and use caution without spreading more fear.

Training notes

Unintended Lessons

The most important lessons are not always the ones that we set out to learn. Many times they are the ones that happen to us along the way while we were focused on something else entirely.

This past month or so I have been tending to my 20 year old Thoroughbred, Pizano as he has been struggling with major health issues. I bought Pizano when he was 12 years old as an accomplished 4th Level Dressage horse. My intention, having passed my Parelli Level 3, was to have a dressage school master to re-enter the competitive arena. My intention was to learn dressage from Pi and I suppose that is exactly what ended up happening. It just happened in a way that I never expected - in a way that has mostly felt like failures.

It has taken me years to look past the failures and see all the value that has come from my interactions with a seemingly "valueless" horse. Having an unreasonable amount of love and respect for this noble horse has kept me always open to the possibility that he could be fine. The process of solving one behavioral or health issue after the next with Pi has ended up shaping my path as a horseman and teacher. He has acted as an important catalyst in my life, leading to new teachers, new information and a huge variety of healing modalities.

Because Pi has been in my life, with all his various sufferings, I have come to understand first hand the importance of paying attention to the horse's body and the price of overlooking seemingly unimportant signals that many horses simply cope with. Because of Pi I can see the value, the personal growth and the learning that happens while owning a horse that cannot always be ridden. I have seen in a personal and emotional way the effects of poor training techniques and how horses struggle and often suffer to accommodate our agendas.

Pi was one of the first horses to make it abundantly clear to me that "behavior" problems were often a result of the challenges horses have in the bodies and movement. Although Pi came to me with a surprising set of problems already in place I have to say that I contributed more to the problems and less to the solutions. I have had to watch Pi suffer the consequences of my extreme effectiveness as a trainer while I still lacked the understanding of what I should be training towards. In other words, all the years I was practicing proficiency with techniques made matters worse for Pi because I was only working on what I wanted - a task, a string or a ribbon. I had misused my abilities due to simple ignorance of my horse's real needs.

By keeping this horse as my own and constantly searching for better answers to the problems and better results, I have grown substantially as a person, as a trainer and as a teacher. Where many people sell of their problem horses, especially trainers, I have found my personal journey through horsemanship benefited immeasurably by keeping my horses over the long term. I have had the opportunity to confront my errors, discover my ignorance and short comings and then work through them in order to attain the real results that I sought. Perhaps this is also why my experience of progress in horsemanship always leads me backwards. I have had to go back and deeper into the fundamentals and quality of the basics. In my experience, not only with Pi but with all the challenging horses that have come my way, the solutions are usually found by improving the quality of the simple things such as relaxation, attention, focus, balance, movement and simple engagement.

Like the people I meet with un-ridable horses, I have gone through the ups and downs, the financial challenges and the emotional setbacks only to realize that things generally do happen for a reason. As much as I have "failed" with Pizano - always feeling like my learning comes just a little too late for him - I am unbelievably grateful to have this horse in my life. He has challenged me and provided more learning opportunities than I ever thought I wanted. He has shown me first hand that a relationship with a horse goes way beyond the pleasure of riding. The relationship itself is the arena where we get to discover those things that are truly important in life. This I believe is the essence of horsemanship.

Thanks to Pi.

Until next time

My best regards,

Kirsten

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