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WEXFORD
TRAINING



Wexford Training

Dear Friends,
Happy 4th of July!!

Can it be that I have not sent out a newsletter since January? In looking through my folder, I see that is in fact the case! I have had several comments that people think I dropped off the planet - but I am still here and still working away in Palm City.

From January through June I had working students coming and going, out of town students and guests and a very full work schedule - all of which I am very grateful for, but the days ran out of hours quickly. Finally with July, my life has slowed down, the house has emptied out and I am getting back on track with the organizational end of the business. I am still mostly a one-man operation, so thank you from the bottom of my heart, for your patience with me.

News updates

- My trip in June to Utah and California was fabulous. It was great to catch

up with all those students out west and see the progress that they have made over the winter. I was really impressed with how every student worked with the simple concepts that I had given them. I only get to see these groups twice a year and they are all developing calm, willing and beautiful horses. It is very exciting. I will be back in the Salt Lake area of Utah and the Arroyo Grande area of California again in October.

- I am headed up to Severn, Maryland July 13 -16 to meet with a new group of students. I am very excited to meet with yet another group that seems to be my "niche". I find that people who are stuck somewhere in the Parelli levels, have purchased a Balance Saddle, may have worked with Gavin Scofield or are frustrated with their goals towards competition seem to somehow find me. What I teach anymore is so basic, fundamental and simple it seems to be a blend that people can apply without deviating from their chosen goal.

- Yes, I am still working

on the website. Not much activity there yet, but watch that space for some fun changes and new information.

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Training notes

I love to pull out books when I have to travel. It helps pass the time for long layovers and delays at the airport. This last trip I took a book with me by Susanne von Dietze called "Balance in Movement" The Seat of the Rider. The author is not only an experienced Dressage competitor but also a professional physical therapist. She does a beautiful job explaining in scientific detail how the human form must operate on the back of a horse. The book is filled with simple ways to check your position through feel, finding the specific bones and parts of your own body that she is referring to and how our joints, muscles and balance must function.

I believe correct rider balance is critical to helping a horse develop as a ridden horse. Competition doesn't even have to enter the picture. For the sake of the

horse's long term health, soundness and well being, I believe we owe it to the horse to become balanced, effective and communicative riders. A person can only develop enough feel and timing to have a conversation with the horse if the body is in correct alignment. A classical seat is "classical" much more for scientific reasons than fashion. That posture, whether the joints are closed for jumping or open for dressage or western riding, is how a human form must mechanically balance on the back of a horse. This is not new information and certainly not my personal information. But each instructor will have a way of presenting material that makes classical concepts in riding and horse training more understandable and practical. I found that Susanne von Dietze has done a tremendous job making the function of the human body more understandable and practical.

While in Utah I had a beginner rider join into the clinic. In the short time he had been riding he had already developed very poor posture in the saddle. With almost all of his weight in his seat, he was leaning back against the back of the saddle with his feet stuck forward in front of him. His horse was emotional and hard to slow down or stop. What was interesting to me is that this man is a super athlete. He is not only a ski instructor, but also loves ski racing down steep slopes. He told me that he was riding the way he saw everyone else ride and he thought that was the correct way to ride a horse. I asked him if he could balance on skis in that posture and make his way down a bunny slope - no way! When I asked him to pretend he was ready to ski, he adjusted his posture very closely to a classical seat. This man is a master at balance and controlling his body, but because he had a different perception of what you are supposed to look like on the back of a horse he abandoned his sense of balance for what he thought to be correct riding. As he regained his natural balance on the horse he suddenly became a quiet rider and more effective leader. As a result his horse gave him more attention and became quieter and calmer.

Balance is balance is balance is balance. If a person can ski, snowboard, ice skate, surf, roller blade, skateboard, has their sea legs on a boat or knows how to ride a bike, then that person knows how to balance in motion. What is common to all those endeavors is our body, our structure. With riding the big difference is that we appear to be sitting. If you sat on a bicycle with all your weight in your seat and leaning back, how long would the bike stay upright? We get away with being out of balance on a horse because the horse has four legs and a broad back instead of two skinny tires with a tiny seat. But our lack of independent balance can affect not only the way a horse travels, but his confidence in our ability to be a good leader as well.

There is no greater secret than between a horse and a rider. Your horse knows when he gets you out of balance and your ability to maintain your balance (or not) greatly affects the horse's ability to do the job you are asking. Next time you have a ride, imagine you are standing level on the ground instead of sitting. Imagine you are balancing yourself on a bicycle instead of a horse. As the horse moves he becomes "uneven terrain" or "the ocean" - he creates the motion. Your job is just to stay balanced and level, making tiny adjustments in your body as the motion changes.

Until next time

My best regards,

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