



NATURAL REMUDA EQUINE LEARNING CENTER NEWSLETTER JUNE, 2009

CATHY'S CORNER

This month we have a guest columnist. Her name is Kathie Leppard. Kathie, one of our apprentices, is a very talented lady. She is an artist in stained glass, works with horses, writes, and does all of these things very well. Thank you Kathie, for writing this column this month.

“Natural Horsemanship” ...What Does That Really Mean?

My boss likes to say, “You’ll never see a horse give another horse a carrot.” It made me smile, but it also made me think. How do horses get other horses to do things? How do they communicate with each other? And, are the answers the inspiration behind the growth of the “Natural Horsemanship” phenomena?

So few of us are privileged anymore to see horses in the wild. How could we possibly know and understand them? We cannot look to ourselves for clues because of the vast differences in the way humans and horses function. We are predators, they are prey. We are clan animals, they are herd. They challenge their leaders constantly (a habit we may wish to adopt) . This is all part of the

natural order and has assisted in their survival.

Our current training techniques stem from a time when horses were necessary tools. Historically, they were used for military transport, to perform farm and ranch work, and as a huge source of power. The personal dignity of the horse was not high on anyone’s list, nor was the concept of equine communication.

Riding has slowly evolved to become a pleasure activity. The upside of this transition is that the practical constraints and utilitarian needs have diminished, allowing for the horse owners expanded interest in alternative training methods. Our curiosity seems to be growing as we learn more from and about the horse.

Historically, in the US, the people who stopped to study new ways to train horses were mostly cowboys who were searching for deeper levels of understanding and kinder, more effective ways to achieve their goals. They “planted the seeds” of what we now call natural horsemanship, as they shared with others their discoveries.

Unfortunately, empathy and understanding are ideas that are not always present with horse owners. When the average horse owner begins training using traditional or “normal”



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methods, they generally focus on what they want the horse to do...what task is to be mastered. They are attempting to control a thousand pounds of spirit, muscle, energy and often fear with almost no awareness of what these animals are trying to say to us. The horse doesn't speak English. They speak to us with their body movements and positions, sounds, looks, even moods. This is not just unfortunate for the horse, but also for the human who is missing an incredible opportunity.

On the other hand, we have (and I say this kindly) the "peppermint lady syndrome" (no bias intended fellas). These people wish to coax, bribe, and praise their way into the hearts of their horses, sometimes thinking of them as a pet, like a dog. Very often these owners have horses that range somewhere between pushy and downright dangerous. We forget horses can and do hurt people everyday.

Even though these two kinds of horse owners are riding for different reasons, each one still has a need for safety and control. A horse is always looking for safety and comfort, and they feel it is their right to challenge you. This can be a serious problem if you are not willing to become their fearless leader. People must

understand the "herd of two" concept before they begin training. You are either leader or follower, there is no teamwork in the equine herd.

These ideas all seem simple enough, even obvious to some. However, when your horse starts kicking and biting, running away with, or worse, over you, or just plain old ignoring you...then frustration and anger quickly overcome intellect. And the fight begins. Natural Horsemanship is simply learning how to communicate with your horse in a language they understand...theirs!

By Kathie Lynne Leppard

UPCOMING CLINICS

June 7, 2009 - Intermediate Clinic , at the Natural Remuda Equine Learning Center, Utopia, TX.

This Clinic is for people who have been working with us a while and who are ready for some intermediate and advanced riding. We will do a pre-ride check with ground work, and then will ride. We will do weaves, turn on the forehand, stops, backs, and footfalls. The riders will also learn to ride with just the hackamore.



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June 13, 2009 - AAYHA show, Seguin

We will be showing at this show, with Sox and Bandit. Join us for a nice day out with the horses.

June 20, 2009 - Judging a Natural Horsemanship show at McKinney.

Jere has been invited to judge a Natural Horsemanship show for the Natural Horsemanship Association of Texas, at McKinney, TX. He has been reading and studying their handbook. This is quite an honor and an opportunity to work with an organization of this size and quality and we are going to have lots of fun.

NEW NEWS

Apprentice Sessions....The Long and Short of it.

One of the main problems most people who want to learn about horses have, is that they just don't work with enough horses for enough hours. We have started this apprenticeship program for that reason. The purpose of these sessions is not so much to learn to ride, as it is to learn to read the different types of horse personalities, and then motivate that personality. We will work with a large variety of horses and their

personalities. Last year we had about 25 horses go through the course, so the students saw a lot of different kinds of problems. Our apprentices changed dramatically in how they dealt with horses, both their own and the ones in the apprenticeship program.



We are trying two types of Apprentice sessions this year. The **Long Apprenticeship Session** will be starting January 5, 2010. It will be 36 days long over January, February and March. We will go to class Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of every week. Classes will start at 9 a.m. every day and we will work outside every day we can. If the weather is really bad, we will watch videos and have discussions.

We have racked our brains, trying to figure out a way to make an apprentice program for people who work, or are otherwise busy during the week. This is what we have come up with for now. If you have a better idea on how to do the Short Apprentice



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Session, e-mail us. We are very open to suggestions.

The **Short Apprentice Session** is on the weekend, for people who have to work or have children. It will start September 12, 2009 and will be 20 days long, over September, October, and November. We will go to class every Saturday and Sunday. Classes will start at 9 a.m. While this session is not as long as the other, it is very intensive and you need to be focused.

If you would like to join us for either of these Apprentice Sessions and learn some new and different horse knowledge, or would like more information, please call or e-mail us.

FROSTI, The Wonder Pony

We receive lots of mail about horses that people want to give away. Frosti is one of these horses.



She is 7 years old and is a large pony, maybe measuring close to 14 hands. She is a red roan with a black mane and tail. She is close to Killeen, TX, but we will be visiting up there and

could haul her back for anyone who wants her. She is free and the owner would like her to go to a good home where they would use her and enjoy her. She would make a good project horse for an older child, who is learning Natural Horsemanship. She is not a horse for a beginner or a shy person.

She has learned to accept fly spray, washing, ropes and her feet being messed with. She has been saddled and bridled but not ridden much. She is very smart and her current owner has taught her to count. Jere has handled her and she is a left brained extrovert. She is the type of horse you would have to spend consistent time with, but would make someone an excellent project to learn on.

OLD NEWS

**Tractor Supply Company,
Fredericksburg, TX** - We were almost



rained out for our Tractor Supply Appearance!! It rained and poured



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and came down in buckets, but we didn't dare complain, because we have needed rain so badly in the Hill Country of Texas. About noon, it finally quit and we started our seminar. We had quite a few hardy souls show up and four horses varying from no problems to some problems. There were lots of good questions and everyone had a good time.

Problem Solving Clinic - Natural Remuda Equine Learning Center, Utopia, TX - We did a problem solving clinic here at the Learning Center at Utopia and worked with several horses that had problems ranging from not stopping to bracing to running off. Most of the problems stemmed from lack of foundation, in other words no ground work. But soon everyone was working on that and by the end everyone had some success with their horses.

Lessons - This year we have had lots of kids out for lessons. This is always a wonderful opportunity for Jere and I because we can get them young enough to make a difference in what kind of Horsemanship road they follow. And kids are fun!! We especially want to congratulate Sasha and Natalie for the strides they are making in their

horsemanship journey. Next month we our grandkids are coming, and we are looking forward to more lessons.

JERE'S CORNER

Are your reins attached to your horse's feet?

Knowing where the feet are, and knowing that the feet are attached to the reins, is one of the most important lessons in Natural Horsemanship. The topic has been covered quite a lot, but people are still not able to tell where the feet are. All this takes is time and practice. And here is how to do it.

Ride around the arena and call out footfalls. Learn that the horse's front feet are felt in your legs and the hind feet are felt in your seat. Learn to count cadence with your horse's feet and feel when the leg first comes up, then say left or right.

For example, if you are turning to the left. When the left front leg comes off the ground, I will take the left direct rein, and lead to the left, and support with the right rein, (the indirect rein). Then I will release and the horse will be going to the left. If you don't know that the feet are attached to the reins, you would maybe try to turn the horse to the left, but his left foot would



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have the weight on it and he couldn't move it without hopping or jumping.

When you know where the feet are at all times, you can control the body. When you control the body you start putting it where you want, with the use of your legs. As you progress, and your feel becomes better you will find it takes less to get more.

So, get a friend and start riding around and calling out when each foot leaves the ground. Even if you have to watch the horse's feet, do it. Soon, you will be able to feel in your legs and seat where each foot is. This is the way to begin the journey to becoming a better horseman. **This all comes down to feel and feel comes from experience. No one can teach you experience. The only way you get experience is thru doing.** I urge you to attend clinics, practice and acquire the knowledge to become a better horseman.

For the Horse
Jere