

Report on Sept/October Jutta Schott clinic:

Check out the new photos on the BSEA website from our final Jutta Schott clinic for 2011. It was a great success with beautiful weather and 20 rides. Once again thanks to our Wyoming friends, some of whom were new to riding with Jutta, as well as to our "regulars". We had several auditors, two of whom made the long trip down from Kalispell to watch!

Horses ranged from FEI level warmblood Jim owned by Linda Priddy, working on clean tempi changes, to second level Hanoverian x Quarter Horse Cisco, owned by Kathy Hannahs, who worked on increased lightness in the rein, half pass and haunches in at the canter. Second level Trakehner Pete, owned by Sheila Ruble, got to play with half steps and tempo changes. A new friend, Maverick, a cute and willing one-eyed Arab, arrived with Audra Morrow from Cody. Jean Allbright brought one of our three clinic buckskins, Sugar, who worked on some training level basics, as did Diane Erhart with her aged warmblood mare, Kachina. Nadine Horning brought a lovely appendix quarter horse gelding whose improvement from Saturday to Sunday caused Jutta to remark on the way to the airport that it was the sort of change that made teaching so satisfying.

Emily Zalewski's rides on Richie, her new, young quarter horse gelding, left her smiling ear to ear. Emily's student, Jenny, brought another great little buckskin, also working on Training level material. Pat Tompkins rode her husband's ex-ropo horse, a handsome Palomino gelding who was game for learning a new career in dressage despite being in his twenties and dealing with a painful eye ulcer.

Speaking of being game, Jutta showed her usual endurance and perseverance as she stayed on her feet and taught ten lessons on Sunday despite having a nasty bladder infection. A rush to the Ruble's medicine cabinet, which was mostly full of dog antibiotics, finally yielded a suitable human medication that worked fast enough that Jutta was able to continue her full day.

A few small tidbits: Where you put the horse's neck is determined by where they can keep their balance and go in self-carriage. Sometimes just a minute adjustment up or down or a little more out will enable a horse to perform markedly better.

Different horses respond differently to cues from the rider when working on half steps. Experiment to see what works best: a simple cluck, a quicker use of the leg or perhaps just laying the whip along the horse's side or over the rump. Keep the bit loose and active in the horse's mouth without the head wagging back and forth. Use your seat as if you were going to trot (but don't) to "bounce" his back up. Keep your hips moving but your shoulders level.

Riding a young horse in a jump saddle allows them more freedom, as it encourages the rider to get up off the horse's back with a shorter stirrup length.

When there is too much weight in the rein, sometimes it's the horse, but sometimes it's due to the rider, who wants to lean on the rein to use it as a balancing crutch. When the horse gets heavy, "take the rein he doesn't want to take, give the rein he wants to lean on." If the horse overbends on one rein to avoid taking it correctly, use the opposite rein to briefly straighten him, then give that rein again and resume taking the rein he doesn't want. When giving on a rein, the rider can give forward and down, so the horse follows your hand, or straight out and forward or slightly out to the side, in which case there is no following.

If the big muscle behind the poll on the side of the neck is bulging and appears hard, the horse isn't coming through. One can "unkink" the neck with a judicious twist of the wrist of the inside hand, coming up towards the rider's opposite shoulder with a quick diagonal flick.

The arch of the horse's body in front of the saddle should match the arch behind.

Some riders were asked to check on their turning aids, seeing if they could turn their horses with leg pressure only, not just the reins. They were also asked if they could send the horse forward and bring them back again in slight tempo changes without use of the reins.

Jutta reminded several riders to pay attention to the second stride of a transition, to be sure the horse has actually continued forward and not dropped back behind the rider's leg. She says many riders often tend to focus only on the first stride, and forget to follow through during transitions, allowing the horse to drop on the forehand.

This is just a brief sampling of what went on. There was a lot more. Jutta will be working on her clinic schedule for 2012 in the next month and the new dates will be posted on the website. Be sure to check in and save the dates when they show up!