

**Big Sky Equestrian Association will be hosting a Centered Riding clinic at WEP on June 21-22!!!** Entry forms and liability waivers will soon be posted on the BSEA website. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about a world famous technique for improving one's riding skills. If you were unable to participate in BSEA's Balimo clinic, here is another chance to radically increase your ability to communicate more effectively with your horse. If you found Carol Brett's clinic interesting and useful, this will be a great follow-up to her grounding in basic bio-mechanics of the horse and rider.

Far from being a dry lecture series, Centered Riding Techniques employ a great deal of imagery, allowing riders to learn kinesthetically as well as intellectually. Format will include an introductory Awareness session, followed by groups of four riders at a time. Auditors are invited to participate in the Awareness session exercises as well as to watch the group riding sessions.

BSEA is bringing in Judy Cross-Strehlke, from Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, one of only 14 Advanced Level IV Centered Riding instructors/clinicians in the U.S. and Europe. Her Centered Riding clinics are designed to help riders of all disciplines, whether Western, combined training, or dressage. She is currently on a teaching trip to Finland and Holland, but is returning by June to conduct a clinic first in Colorado and then here in Billings. She has studied Tai Chi, uses energy work, teaches clinics with Alexander Technique teachers, and has studied TEAM for horses. She also uses Hands On Therapeutic Massage for releasing blocked and painful muscles in both horse and rider. She is an advanced Certified Instructor for the North American Riding for the Handicapped. She coached the University of Maine's Equestrian Team for five years and teaches the riding course for the University's Certificate of Equine Studies. She and her husband are both licensed Maine guides and run Adventure Based learning programs in the Maine mountains.

Centered Riding® was developed by Sally Swift, author of the best-selling book and videotapes, and is now taught by Centered Riding Instructors around the world. Centered Riding® is an innovative way of expressing the classical principles of riding, using body awareness, centering, and imagery. Centered Riding® encompasses all seats and styles of riding.

Centered Riding® is based on a knowledge of human and horse anatomy, balance, movement, and on understanding how the mind affects the body and how both affect the horse. It uses centering and grounding techniques from the oriental martial arts, along with body awareness, mental imagery and sports psychology. Through increasing body awareness, inhibiting old patterns, and replacing them with a more balanced, free, and coordinated use of self, both horse and rider can move more freely and comfortably, and develop their best performance.

## The four basics of Centered Riding

- **Soft Eyes** - Encourage visual and physical awareness, better peripheral vision, and improved "feel."
- **Breathing** - Using the diaphragm and breathing correctly for better posture, relaxation, and energy.
- **Balance or Building Blocks** - Aligns the riders body for improved balance, straightness, and ease of movement.
- **Centering** - Using the center of balance, movement and control, located deep in the body, gives quiet strength, harmony and power, as in the oriental martial arts.

These fundamentals, along with **clear intent** for effective control, direction and use of aids, and **grounding** for stability and balance, promote freedom of movement, confidence and harmony between horse and rider, and can help in solving many problems.

## What are the Benefits of Centered Riding?

Centered Riding® teaches you how to help your body do what you need to do in order to ride well. Centered Riding® techniques help promote suppleness, stability, and clearer aids, making riding more comfortable for both horse and rider. As you learn and experience the principles through your horse's motion and responses, you and your horse tune in to each other and work together in harmony. These techniques can increase confidence and enjoyment and release tension in horses and riders, making training easier. They also help people cope with old injuries or chronic conditions that cause pain during or after riding.

Centered Riding® is used successfully by riders and instructors of all ages, interests, and levels, from pleasure riders to international competitors, and in therapeutic riding. It can be applied to any type of horse or horsemanship. Most of all, it makes riding more enjoyable for horses and riders.

Sally Swift, founder of Centered Riding® Inc., was born in 1913 and grew up in Hingham, Massachusetts. Graduating from school, she taught riding for the next twelve years before moving on into other fields. Retiring from the American Holstein Association at 62, she planned to teach riding again "to a few of my friends". This was the beginning of Centered Riding®. As she developed her techniques and the four basics of Centered Riding®, the demand for Centered Riding® clinics and Instructor clinics blossomed and soon her teaching activities were taking her all over the United States as well as to Canada, Australia and Europe.

Now semi-retired, Sally is using her experience in "centering" and "use of self" techniques in new areas such as singers and physical therapists as they help their clients.

Her book **Centered Riding** , now a classic, was published in 1985 and recently celebrated its twentieth year in print. It's been translated into fourteen languages and has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide. In 1986, Sally produced two videos **Centered Riding: Tape 1** and **Centered Riding: Tape 2**, which are readily available now in both VHS and DVD formats. A second book, **Centered Riding 2: Further Exploration** was published in 2002 and is following in its predecessor's footsteps with eight foreign language editions and more to come. The books and videos are available in many tack shops or can be ordered by contacting the Centered Riding ® Office.

In the last eighteen years, Sally has been working with the Alexander Technique which has enabled her to discard the back brace she had worn for ten years. The Alexander Technique is a method of re-educating the mind and body towards greater balance and integration with special reference to posture and movement. The Technique has not changed any of her basic principles but has added significantly to the depth and subtlety of her teaching.

Cost for two days of lectures and two riding sessions is \$250. Auditing one day will be \$25; both days will be \$40. These fees will barely allow us to cover clinic fees, insurance, arena rentals, plane fare, etc. We have tried to keep costs as low as possible in the hope that a number of you will be able to take advantage of this opportunity. There has not been a Centered Riding based clinic in this region for a great number of years despite the fact that many instructors utilize Centered Riding imagery techniques in teaching their own students.