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### TEC Spring & Summer Recap

Time has flown by to the say the least, and I've been quite tardy with the newsletter!

Travel has become a recurrent theme in 2016 and after the wonderful winter in South America I returned stateside offering clinics throughout the western States.

I thoroughly enjoy every opportunity I have to meet new and enthusiastic folks and watch as they begin to feel empowered and inspired to create a better partnership with their horse both in and out of the saddle. For those who have the opportunity to participate consistently in clinics and lessons, it is inspiring to see the effort, commitment and results your trial-and-error journey offers. I always smile as folks randomly send updates and pictures about the progress and epiphanies they and their horse have experienced while building the foundation and upon a quality relationship.

An uneventful spring journey from AZ to ID had us returning to lovely weather and temperatures and I basically hit the ground running with a slew of training horses on the waiting list and a flurry of clinics that followed.

The EHV-1 Virus has been reported in the area and so I have limited horse layovers and the ones accepted for training. It is a devastating virus, please be sure to educate yourself on the latest outbreaks in your area.

Several recent buying trips to the middle of Idaho, western Montana and Canada have added a few adventures, fantastic wildlife and beautiful country to travel through!

This year a few folks made the long voyage and I've had a few international working students; it has been a lot of fun interpreting, laughing and learning the equine lingo from other cultures!

As for looking into the future, this winter I will be again heading out on a remote adventure to work with horses. Though plans are still being formalized, the goal is to work with the wild descendants of Spanish horses who have been left to roam.

I'm already scheduling clients for the spring and summer of 2017. Please review the calendar and find out if I'll be in an area near you. Or if you'd like to bring me to your area, please see the "How to host a clinic" below.

I hope you are enjoying quality time with your horse and look forward to working with you in the future!

Sam

### FOR SALE

25 Bushel Manure Spreader- Stored Inside



\$1800, Located in Sandpoint

Corrosion resistant bed floor.  
Chain driven  
Lever controlled chain and rotary blades.  
Tongue extends 33" in front of box frame.  
Safety shields for ground drive mechanisms.  
Dimensions:  
48"Wx31"Hx99"L

[EMAIL](#)



## More Go than Whoa

I believe the halt is underrated and the least refined common task riders ask of their horses. It is not solely about physically standing still. I use it as an opportunity to ask the horse's brain to pause, influence his thought and to prepare him for whatever physical movement I am about to ask.

Horses by nature are reactive and flee when unsure. They will move off quickly, get to a "safe" distance, then stop and look back at whatever had bothered them. That instinctive behavior is seldom desired by the rider, nor is it safe. Individuals need to teach their horse the unnatural act of mentally and physically pausing, allowing the rider time to make a decision, and then convey it to their horse, before any physical movement occurs from the horse.

On calm days, spending time and energy to support the horse to learn how to slow down, pause, and mentally address something, offers him an alternative and reasonable (i.e. safer) way to "handle" a future scenario that may concern him. Although it initially goes against his instinct, the act of halting if fairly and respectfully presented can decrease his stress and increase his confidence every time a new event occurs. Dramatic, dangerous, defensive, and anticipative behaviors can diminish (or be prevented) over time if the halt is used as a supportive tool rather than an attempt to physically limit a horse's excessive movement.

Think about when leading/riding your horse through a gate, loading into or backing out of a horse trailer, crossing a narrow/slippery/steep ravine/hillside/cliff, when you're tacking him up, when you mount, when you have to pause for wildlife/another horse/ livestock, etc. How often do you ask your horse to halt? If you do ask, does he fuss, fidget, wiggle, move, paw, swing his hindquarters around, chomp on the bit, shake his head/scratch compulsively or display other "busy" behaviors?

I find many horses have trained their humans well. People learn to work "around" their horse, (going along with how the horse attempts to do something) to avoid conflict, rather than asking the horse to participate with soft, intentional effort. The absence of effective communication from the person and lack of quality response in the horse's behavior displayed initially while on the ground will only decrease if asked while riding.

I use the analogy, "Would you feel safe driving a car if it had no steering, blinkers, or brakes?" People make a funny face and say that they would not drive the car. Cont'd→

Yet when it comes to working with and sitting on a 1,000 pound animal, with its own set of emotions and thoughts, folks tend to lower their standard in what they will accept. All too frequently people feel they are at the mercy of the behaviors their horse offers and are fearful to "interrupt" the horse, in an attempt to avoid a dramatic scenario. Most horses are used to "leading tend to have a "take it or leave it" mentality toward their riders, leaving the person with the uneasy feeling of "surviving the ride."

While on the ground, assess how much effort does it take for your horse to halt on a calm day compared to on a stressful one? How frequently do you remind your horse to stand if he is asked to do so for more than 30 seconds? Does your horse halt, then creep forward slowly when you are not comp on him? Will he stand when you mount, and can you sit there without any fussing from him? Whether riding alone or in a group of horses can your horse halt softly, stand quietly while your reins are long and loose irrelevant of what the other horses are doing? After riding at speed, does he get "amped up" and do you have a hard time slowing down? Have you changed (or had it suggested) that your horse completely focused the human" and needs a more severe bit, or other equipment to help "control" him?

Whether riding in a competitive discipline or for pleasure, starting colts or re-educating older horses, there is never a time when we should ignore the quality of the halt. Some factors that affect its outcome include how the rider's aids are used and the timing of asking for the halt. The two following common scenarios leave the rider and horse lacking confidence and contribute to the halt being a stressful experience rather than a tool:

Whether from the ground or in the saddle, if the horse ignores the initial aid, the person asks again stronger, the horse moves three or four extra steps, and then eventually leaks into a heavy, unbalanced halt, leaving the rider feeling like they are waterskiing on the reins.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the horse immediately slams on the brakes defensively overreacting to the rider's aid, but as soon as the aid diminishes, the horse quickly moves forward, anticipating what is about to be asked, rather than waiting for direction from the rider.

Another factor that affects if the horse steps balanced into the halt or crashes down onto their forehead, leaning heavily on the bit, is literally the timing of when the aid is offered. Cont'd→

Continued

If riders approached the halt in terms of influencing a step that is *about* to happen, rather than *reacting* to one that has already occurred, the halt could feel better to the horse. If the timing of the halt interrupts a horse's step, he is left standing unbalanced and awkward. Then extra steps are made to regain balance and the horse will rush as he departs from the halt.

Perhaps presenting the halt from a positive perspective and prioritizing the quality of the halt your horse offers, you can decrease being a "hopeful" rider, increase the support you offer your horse and experience a softer and willing partner. Having it as an effective tool will contribute to refining and improving your horse's performance. Have fun with it!

## Looking Ahead: Winter 2016/17 Scheduling Clinics Now

I have been teaching consistently in the East San Diego County over the past three winters. A few changes are being made in an attempt to lighten the schedule of being hosted generously at Oakzanita Ranch in Descanso. A committee has formed that will be making arrangements for booking and scheduling for participants at the ranch. I'm also looking for possible other facilities to continue and expand the opportunities to offer monthly sessions and clinics at. There are many options from Full Immersion Clinics (intensive, full day sessions, limited to eight participants, ranging from three to five days), individual lesson days, private farm visits, etc.

If you have a facility or would like to learn about hosting a clinic early in the month of February or April 2017 please let me know. My schedule is booking fast, and I don't want folks who I've had the opportunity to work with over the last few years to miss out! Please see the "How to host a clinic" for details or [email](#) me with other inquiries. The dates currently scheduled at the end of this newsletter can allow for extra dates to be added at other facilities.

## How to host a clinic with Sam!

Typically clinics are booked months in advance, but I do occasionally have last minute openings. It can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months to get a clinic organized. Once you have six to nine people committed to participate I will be happy to schedule a clinic.

**Host's responsibilities:** Don't be scared! It's quite easy and a fun way to gather like-minded horse people for a fun filled, safe and supportive clinic.

- Determine at least two date options, times, length of clinic (3-5 days) and clinic content/focus
- Secure a suitable facility to hold the clinic (see requirements below)
- Distribute and collect all paperwork (see below) related to clinic registration and liability waivers
- Collect fees from participants one month PRIOR to the clinic
- Mail participant's registration, liability waiver and fees and submit to Sam one month prior to clinic
- Organize accommodation/meals for Sam
- On-site" organizer during the clinic

### Why should you host a clinic?

- Opportunity to bring Sam to your area
- Meet other likeminded horse people
- Host discount of 30% off clinic fee

### Participant Requirements:

*Clinic Size-* Smaller, personalized clinics designed to address the individual participant's needs. A minimum of six and maximum of eight participants is necessary to hold a clinic. All ages, riding levels and disciplines welcome.

*Clinic Format-* Flexible according to the needs and focus of the participants. Most include individualized groundwork sessions and both individual and group riding sessions.

For details on hosting a clinic

## Herd bound behavior- Resistance between Human and Horse

Many of us have experienced varying degrees of resistance from a horse due to their strong desire to be with another horse. Scenarios may arise when leaving stablemates at the barn area, during competitions with constant calling to a buddy horse who is out of sight, to not wanting to be ridden in a different spot on a group ride or when attempting to leave another horse on a trail ride, etc. Whatever the case, the herd bound horse's behavior is frustrating, can be dangerous and does not lead to a satisfying ride for either the rider or the horse.

The behavior itself is not the issue, but rather is a symptom of an underlying issue. With a herd bound horse, my question is, "Why does my horse feel more confident and comfortable being with other horses rather than me?" The desire to "be with the herd" is based on survival instinct; if the horse feels better being with other horses rather than people, he is going to do everything he can to get back to the herd. I view the horse's physical behavior as a reflection of his mental and emotional state.

People tend not to believe a horse's emotions when he is displaying subtle concern, insecure or worried behaviors. As a solution, folks try to "persuade" (whether gently or aggressively, through using strong aids and/or equipment, etc.) and push the horse physically through his concern, versus considering *why* the behavior continues to re-appear. A horse that is "forced" through enough scenarios will progressively show more resistance with each future occurrence and his actions will evolve into other unwanted behaviors; it will not just "go away" unless the underlying issue is addressed.

My philosophy is to create a mentally available horse that asks, "What would you like?" versus most horses that "tell" a person the limitations of their willingness to participate. If you teach your horse to "think" their way through something (whether it is how slow the steps

are, stepping in a specific spot, teaching them to stand and wait, etc.) their body will stay far more relaxed and compliant. Their mental availability will allow an opportunity for you to influence their thoughts, creating safer and positive physical changes.

Misinterpretation of dramatic behavior leaves the person unable to recognize that the horse only has so many ways of asking for help. At the peak of a horse's severe stress, he can appear defensive towards what the person is offering as guidance. Rather than waiting until things completely fall apart to initiate leadership, or approaching a scenario with a "let's see what will happen today" feeling, which is a passive and reactive approach, there are proactive tools a person can establish to support the horse through his concern. This will decrease the dramatic behavior as moments of stress arise, such as when trying to get back to the herd.

For me, the initial step is creating short, quality sessions assessing what the horse is offering. Behaviors such as how quickly the horse displays resistance towards the human, (not wanting to be caught, hanging on the lead rope if walking away from the herd or barn, excessive movement while tied, groomed, tacked and mounted, etc.) gives an honest overview as to what I'll encounter the more "independent" I ask the horse to be.

The goal then is to encourage the horse's brain to stay with me. It takes time to create opportunities to gain and build his confidence. Consider that every time you work with your horse, you are teaching him something; whether it is to ignore you, offer minimal effort, or your lack of initiative as his leader. Every moment, every step, every thought matters.

I find that working with a horse at liberty in a safe place such as a round pen, can create opportunities for the horse to express his opinions and learn how to mentally narrow down his options to remain with me, without having to be physically constrained.

It can be an ideal place for an initial mental conversation, not a place to run or physically wear down the horse. The goal is to get the horse to “think, and then move.” (There are other options if you do not have a round pen, to get the same results.) The liberty sessions evolve from the round pen into the horse being loose in the pasture and offering the same willingness to be with me, irrelevant of other horses around him.

The conversation continues with the lead rope and evolves to when I use the rein from the saddle to direct his thought. To create successful and confidence building rides, I start in small increments. I will ride within the vicinities of other activities and horses, and practice working with the horse to get his thought away from wherever it may drift. The easier and faster he can “let his thoughts go” of his buddies, the farther the distance away I will ride.

I will often come and go multiple times, rather than teaching the horse to anticipate a pattern of where I ride and what I’ll ask. Eventually the horse learns that regardless of the other horses, his brain and emotions can stay with me, he can feel emotionally quiet and stay physically relaxed, creating the opportunity for a rewarding ride.

### **Thirteen Considerations for Perspective Horse Buyers**

- 1.) Have a list of “deal breakers” and if within the first conversation the horse’s owner says anything that you’ve listed, hang up, and walk away.
- 2.) Listen not to what the owner is saying, but what they aren’t.
- 3.) Plan an early morning try-out, always have the owner ride first, and arrive ten minutes earlier than planned. This decreases opportunity for sedatives/drugging of the horse, or the horse to be “wore out” before you see it.
- 4.) Ask that the horse be either in its stall or pasture, so that you can watch for/how it is to handle, lead, groom, tack, etc.

5.) Answers such as, “I want a shorter horse,” are red flags and you aren’t getting the real story.

6.) If the horse seems okay on the first ride in a familiar setting, ask to take the horse off the property to a different location; many times a horse’s real feelings about life come out in a new setting.

7.) Ask about the current tack used and why that particular kind was chosen. Especially when it comes to bits many horses have more severe bits used as the years pass.

8.) Enthusiastic, exuberant, “loves to run” are all synonyms for “out of control horse.”

9.) Be honest in your desires and goals and realistic about your current abilities and budget. In my experience 80% of folks that make an emotional buy, “I just fell in love with him!” realize within two months that they’ve made a mistake and now have the hard task and financial risk of trying to resell the horse.

10.) Blue sky potential vs. The horse today. Depending on your goals and intentions, are you investing in the horse’s future potential, or committing to the horse before you today. Thousands of dollars are spent in trying to reap the rewards of the “blue sky potential” and often lead to nowhere but money down the drain.

11.) In it for the long haul. Life never goes according to plan, we get hurt, horses get hurt, things happen. Out of all the horses in the world, is this the horse you are committing to providing for and maintaining irrelevant of any of life’s circumstances?

12.) Visit at least 20 potential horses before you buy one. I’m not kidding. So many folks have limited exposure as to “what is out there” and often just feel overwhelmed and then pressured to hurry up and buy one. It is far easier to say no and walk away, than to feel burdened by a horse you realize was a mistake.

13.) Listen to the voice in your head. Sadly, there are many folks that get hurt trying out a new horse. If there is anything about the horse you’re unsure of, DO NOT GET ON!

### Consultation Call

**What is it?** Don't let distance hinder your learning experience! You have the option of a private half hour or a one hour phone consultation. I will address any equine related questions, videos or pictures previously submitted by you.

**How much is it?** You can choose from a half hour session (\$40 fee) or an hour session (\$60 fee), payable via PayPal; click here to [register](#).

Once you make a payment, an emailed confirmation will be sent. We will then schedule a day and time to for the consultation.

**How do you sign up?** Please click the [link](#)

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## Sam's Fall Schedule 2016/2017

### October

October 20-25

Oakzanita Ranch

Descanso, CA

[Email](#) for details

### November

October 27-Nov

Ossipee, NH

[Email](#) for details

November 12-14

Full Immersion Clinic

Private Facility

Descanso, CA

### December & January

OUT OF THE USA

### January

January- 27-29

Oakzanita Ranch

Descanso, CA

[Email](#) for details

### February

February- 24<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>

Oakzanita Ranch

Descanso, CA

[Email](#) for details

### March

March 6-13<sup>th</sup>

Private Facility

Durango, CO

### March

March 24-28

Oakzanita Ranch

Descanso, CA

[Email](#) for details

### April

April 7-9

Oakzanita Ranch

Descanso, CA

[Email](#) for details

Tentatively based on weather.

Please note that all Oakzanita Clinics are now being coordinated though Kathy Young.

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