



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY RICH GOMEZ

STILL PRACTICIN' -AND- GETTIN' BETTER!

So no doubt you read the column I put together last month about four exercises from Brent Graef, Professional Horseman, on how to make sure your horse is supple and bendable. As we all know fundamental exercises develop a responsive horse for any western sport. I came across these exercises from top competitor, Guy Vernon from Kiowa, Colorado. Once again, here are some tips from a pro to help make your horse soft and responsive...like Guy says, "...there's always another layer of softness and responsiveness to uncover..." Each of Guy's exercises is a progression of the previous one, and they sure do help teach our big four-leggeds how to respond in a calm easy way...

1. Lateral Flexion- With this exercise, you pick up your reins in two hands, add a little pressure to the right rein to ask your horse to bend his head and neck in that direction. Guy says your horse should not pivot his head from the poll, but from the withers. If your horse lowers his/her head, that's fine because it shows s/he's relaxed. The tips of the ears should stay level. Release the pressure as soon as your horse gives and repeat on the left side.

2. Vertical Flexion- In this exercise pick up your reins in both two hands and add even pressure to both reins. You're looking for your horse to respond by softening his/her chin and dropping his/her head at the poll. Like Guy says, if you have trouble with this, go back to the lateral flexion and improve it first.

3. Flexion on a circle- In this one you'll be adding motion to lateral and vertical flexion by circling at a jog. This allows your horse to build on the softness he developed standing. Take your reins in two hands and ask your horse to jog on a small circle (about 15 feet in diameter). With your inside rein, ask your horse to give and tip his/her nose slightly to the inside. Guy says you're not asking

for as much flexion as you did when you were standing still. This is a really important exercise because the jog is the most level gait and allows your horse to build on the flexion s/he learned at the halt and transfer it to a steady gait. Jogging on a small circle helps the horse learn to keep his shoulders elevated and balanced. S/he should drive with her/his hips, keeping a slight bend through the ribcage. His/her neck should be relaxed and be looking in the direction of travel. Guy says that with time, this will help create the muscle memory for your horse to carry himself/herself in a balanced position. As always, change directions and work on the opposite side and spend more time on that direction that's not as easy for the horse, but this is hard work so look for a few steps of softness and release and then build on that.

4. Flexion on a straight line- This is kinda the same as #3, but you're jogging in a straight line. To do this exercise take your reins in two hands and ask for a jog. When s/he's going softly with the flexion you've been working on ease him/her into a straight line. You want to focus on the vertical flexion, but your horse should be willing to flex laterally if you ask. Again, as always, if your horse has a hard time staying balanced or loses the soft feel, take him/her back to the circle and do only one side until s/he regains softness.

I know we're always looking for ways to improve our relationship with our horses and it seems these gentle exercises are a great way to build your horse's trust and our confidence. Better yet, they can improve our horses' agility and athletic ability, and make him/her easier to ride. And we all know easy's good! We're all looking for ways to help our buddies react quickly to the slightest cues and be ready to do whatever is asked...sure seems like this is a great way to get to those goals and develop the partnership we all want.

So, as always, until we get together next, here's to all of us practicin' together and ridin' together...see you on the trail...

IMPORTANT DATES

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TODAY (SEE WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

Members Meeting: Thursday, June 3rd

Play Day: Saturday, June 5th

Board Meeting: Thursday, June 10th

Trail Maintenance: Saturday June 12th



MEMBERSHIP REPORT BY SHEILA SEGIEN

Expired: Fiona Nelson 1/10, Patti Williams 1/10, Leslie Ingham 2/10, Jacqui Moreland 2/10, Helen & Fred Bruns 2/10, Karen Peyser 3/10, Roy & Melba Slavin 3/10, Cheryl Segien 4/10, Kim Tillinghast-DeBellis 4/10, Sue Baldwin 5/10, Connie Presley 5/10, Beverly Warren 5/10

Expiring: Rick & Karen Balthaser 6/10, Chris Richardson 6/10, Schicht Family 6/10, Dave & Susan Seroski 6/10, Bob & Spike Wilks 6/10, Alberta Morehouse 6/10

Annual Dues: Individual \$45; Family \$70 for the first two members, add \$8 for each additional family member.



TRAIL BOSS REPORT BY JEFF KELLY

We had some great rides while at Casper's. We encountered rattle snakes and overgrown trails along with a loose horse (that would be my wife's) and one very sore horse due to an extended ride. Friends came from far and wide which included Tehachapi and Missouri. Some former Trabuco residents just can't seem to stay away. It was a beautiful weekend and a convenient time for me as Trail Boss to be camping at Casper's. OC Parks was offering Trail Crew Chief training which I attended and now I am extra qualified to lead those trail maintenance days. Got a pretty certificate to prove it too. Speaking of trail maintenance, don't forget June 12th which is our scheduled day for trail work. We will be meeting

at the equestrian arena at oh nine hundred sharp to hit those trails.

The park ranger has posted this day on the OC Parks website so we will have some Adopt a Park guests. Let's show other volunteers what ETI is all about by having as many of our members show up. The park counts on us to augment their efforts in keeping the trails clear of overgrown brush. Call me if you have any questions at 949-858-7363. The Month End Ride/Event for June will be Saturday the 26th. Now that is the weekend ETI/357 will be camping in O'Neill, but even if you are not up to camping, come on out for a morning ride at 9:00 am.



SADDLEBACK CANYON RIDERS
trabuco canyon, california



ETI 357

Horse Playday!

When: Saturday, June 5th, 2010 at 9am
Registration will begin at 8am!

Cost is \$7 per event for members and \$8 for non-members, lunch included
(Preprint your Waiver and Release form from the website to save time)

Where: O'Neill Regional Park Equestrian Arena

What: Playday Games - Barrels, Poles, Potato,
Ribbon Race, & Step-Squeeze-Spin

How: **Early Bird Registration (ends April 5th)**
\$6 for Members, \$7 for Non-Members
Print out the form, fill it out, and bring it to the Members'
Meeting for the discount! Bring a non-member who signs up
for all games and receive one free game!

Any Questions Contact: Jim Iacono 714-612-1789
jiacono@imgps.com

Go to www.saddlebackcanyonriders.com for further info



WHO ARE THE SADDLEBACK CANYON RIDERS?

The Saddleback Canyon Riders are ETI Corral 357. Established in 1991, we are one of the largest ETI corrals in California with members from South Orange County and points beyond. We are a family-friendly equestrian group based in Trabuco Canyon at the foot of the majestic Saddleback Mountains. Our Corral is committed to supporting and helping maintain O'Neill Regional Park and other local riding trails.

WHAT IS ETI?

Equestrian Trails, Incorporated is a family oriented riding club established as a nonprofit corporation in 1944 with the Charter to be "Dedicated to the Acquisition and Preservation of Trails, Good Horsemanship, and Equine Legislation."

With its combined membership, ETI has successfully worked to keep our trails open and add more equestrian facilities. The more members we have backing equine legislation and trail preservation, the more likely the State, County and City Officials will be to comply with our needs.

ETI Corral 357
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