



# Spring Down Low Down Newsletter

The newsletter of Spring Down Equestrian Center

Vol.5, Issue 2 - Winter 2008-2009

## Welcome

Winter is just around the corner, and we are at the best barn in the area to be able to continue to ride when the weather gets wet and soggy. Our brand new arena houses the latest in technology in regard to equestrian surfaces. Attwood Surfaces are dust free, and that means better air quality for both horse and rider. The giving surface provides better stability and less stress on horse's legs and joints, which helps to prevent soft tissue damage and lamenesses.

Attwood Surfaces also are quick draining, freeze resistant, and require no watering. This means we will not be using excess water, a valuable resource in these times of looming drought.

We are able to ride in the new arena even when there is standing water from a recent rain. The footing is still excellent, with traction good enough for jumping. This means that we will be able to ride outside (and also have our Horse Shows outside) unless there is monsoon caliber rain.

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## Horse Show Updates

Spring Down had two wonderful shows in the second half of this year, in August and October. Our shows are successful in that the participants, for the most part, have a wonderful experience. Everyone learns that the real meaning of being in a horse show is creating that bond between the horse and rider. The riders figure out that the sport of riding teaches horsemanship and sportsmanship, and perhaps most of all, patience and persistence. Not everyone is always able to come home with a ribbon, but everyone should be able to come away with the proud knowledge that they did the best they could, and that they have spent a wonderful day with one of their favorite horse friends.

The sad fact is, however, that there has not been enough interest in our horse shows to continue to do five shows a year. So, for next year, we will be doing four shows (see our [2008-2009 calendar](#)). We know it seems like riding can be an expensive sport, but Carol Goodstein, the owner of Spring Down, has tried very hard to keep the prices of lessons and events as low as possible. The cost of a Spring Down show is close to one tenth the cost of a rated show. The overhead in running an equestrian center like Spring Down is huge, so if you are a rider who is interested in being in Spring Down Horse Shows, make sure you sign up for as many shows as possible to keep the show program up and running.

On September 13th, Spring Down hauled a contingent of talented riders to the Horse Park to participate in the Pony Club Show. As usual, we came away with many, many ribbons, and even one High Point Award (congrats to Lauren Morgenthaler and Likely for winning the Long Stirrup High Point!) But, even more important than the ribbons and awards was the special day that all the participants got to spend with their horses, sharing the anticipation, excitement, and exhilaration at the chance to participate in a show at the Woodside Horse Park.

At our horse show on August 19th, we had a judge, Hilary Dorris, who is the CEO and founder of Hoof Beats of America. This program included a gentle giant named "Frank", a large horse who worked beautifully with the children of this program, building their self confidence and making them smile with his playful demeanor.

Frank ended up with a serious episode of colic, requiring surgery on September 2nd at UC Davis. At our horse show, we were able to raise \$900 on the spur of the moment to help this wonderful horse, due to the large hearts and generosity of the Spring Down Community.

We understand that Frank is doing extremely well, thanks to the generosity of Spring Down folks and others. For further information about Hoof Beats of America, and more details about Frank, please see their web site at [www.hoofbeatsofamerica.org](http://www.hoofbeatsofamerica.org).

### **Christmas is Coming**

It is hard to believe that the holidays are just around the corner! We have a tradition at Spring Down to support the grooms during the holidays. Without these folks who work extremely hard, Spring Down would not exist. A collection envelope will be in the office for this fund. Please give as you can, and the monies will be distributed to all the grooms and stable hands as a holiday gift from everyone. Cash is easiest, but if you wish to write a check, please make it out to "Diane Allison", who is organizing this effort.

### **Give a Gift of Horses this Holiday Season!!**

Check off every person on your holiday list this season with a gift certificate or gift basket of cozy Spring Down apparel and special horsie gifts included in our prepackaged gift baskets. Check out the office for different baskets and goodies to give to the horse-crazy person in your life. Contact Lisa Bailey at (408) 309-5028 if you would like a *customized*, out of this world basket. Lisa is willing to get really creative and make a basket to your liking! Remember to purchase a gift certificate in any denomination to add to the basket! All certificates go toward riding lessons, horse shows, clinics, camps, and other Spring Down events.

### **Christmas Pot Luck Luncheon**

The barn is hosting, among the horses of course, our annual Christmas pot luck luncheon...and you are all invited. Just sign up on the bulletin board (closer to the date) and also put what you would like to contribute to the luncheon. If there is any interest in a gift exchange, we can do that as well. It is a fun event, and we hope you can attend. Please check the office for the date...we are considering Dec. 12th, or Dec. 19th.

### **Welcome to New Horses at Spring Down**

- Butterscotch

- Oreo

## **News from Nacho**

Nacho has been moved from San Quentin to a medical facility in Vacaville, CA. He is required to complete another several months there, and the general consensus is that he will be deported back to Mexico after his release.

He is in generally good spirits, trying to take advantage of the programs that are available from an educational and work standpoint. He is keeping busy, but Nacho would love to hear from all of you, as he loves to receive letters and other correspondence.

We realize this is a very busy time of year, but please try to include Nacho in your Christmas Card list! Now, more than ever, he still needs our support to feel like there are folks out there who remember him, and still care for him.

Please write to Nacho at the following address:

Ignacio Hernandez Flores  
CDC #G07280  
Ord 315 CMF  
PO Box 2000  
Vacaville, CA 95696

## **Tack - Up Lessons at Spring Down**

Spring Down will be continuing to offer group tack-up lessons on a monthly basis. The lessons are scheduled every Sunday, at noon, for one hour.

"Why take this lesson?," you may ask. At Spring Down, we teach comprehensive horsemanship, not just horseback riding. A very important component of horsemanship is understanding the equipment you are using on any given horse: both how it is put on, and how and why it works. The group tack-up lessons will allow time both for demonstration of the equipment that we use, and hands on practice with someone standing by for instruction and assistance.

General grooming and equipment used for grooming will also be taught in the tack-up lesson. And, of course, as we are very safety conscious here at Spring Down, techniques for keeping both you and your horse safe will be taught so that everyone is safe and comfortable during the grooming and tacking-up procedures.

Please see the office to schedule yourself into one of these tack up lessons. If you are unable to make the group lessons, a private lesson may be arranged. The group lessons are preferable, because the hour time will allow you to become familiar with more different types of equipment and also allows for more time to practice. A private lesson is the next best thing, however, if that is what your schedule will allow.

As we get into winter schedules, please remember that Spring Down has a 24 hour cancellation policy. If you do not cancel with 24 hours notice, you will be charged for your lesson. This policy exists because we have reserved your teacher's time for you, your horse's time for you, and very often the horse has been tacked up by one of our grooms.

When requesting a specific horse for a lesson, everyone needs to understand that it is just that:

a request. The office will make every effort to honor that request, but sometimes we have ten requests for the same horse in a given day. Also, all the horses at Spring Down need to get exercise each and every day, so it is our responsibility to make sure that each horse gets ridden by someone (and that one horse doesn't get ridden too much). We try to match the horses and riders as best as possible, but please remember that each horse can teach you something different. Everyone should be here to learn more about riding and horsemanship...not just to ride the same horse over and over again. Be flexible, and you'll be surprised at how many new horse friends you will acquire by branching out a bit...and at how much you will learn.

**Horse Show Dates:** (2009)

- March 22nd
- June 7th
- September 20th
- December 6th

**Holiday Camp:** (2008)

- December 22, 23, 24, & 26th
- Dec. 29, 30, 31, and Jan 2nd, 2009
- (*sign up for an entire week, or by the day!!*)
- Great for last minute shopping...

**Winter Camp:** (2009)

- February 16th - 20<sup>th</sup>

**Spring Camp:** (2009)

- April 6th - 10th
- April 13th - 17th

**Summer Camp Is Coming!** (2009)

- June 15th - June 26th
- July 6th - July 17th
- July 20th - July 31st
- August 3rd - August 14th
- August 17th - August 28<sup>th</sup>

**Intermediate Camp:** (2009)

- June 22nd - June 26th
- December TBD

**Nick Clinics:** (2009)

- April 7th, 8th, & 9th
- June 30th, July 1st & 2nd
- October 6th, 7th, & 8th

**Mini Camps**

Our new monthly program "Crazy About Horses" has been quite successful for those that only have a day to spend with horses and get their "boots wet." It is a perfect option for the parent, friend, or grandparent to ride along with their horse crazy kid. The camp is from 10 AM - 2PM covering many aspects of horsemanship: safety around horses, horse management and care, grooming, understanding how to put on special equipment, a live demonstration, and of course, RIDING! Be sure to sign up early as this program is very popular!

First part of 2009 DATES:

1/24, 2/28, 3/21, 4/25, 5/30

## **Girl Scout "Horse Rider" Badge Programs**

We've been working with the Girl Scouts of Northern California to offer a comprehensive program to fulfill all the requirements of the "Horse Rider" or "Horse Lover" badge. Bring your troop to the barn to ride, groom, and learn the wonderful world of horses! Contact the office to schedule your troop during the week or weekend. Contact Lisa Bailey for more information. Here is an excerpt from a letter received from a Girl Scout Troop Leader:

*"I especially appreciated your pricing for the event which included everything needed for the badge. You've probably figured out that Girl Scout groups can not support high-end activities, so offering "best value" is a real plus for this market segment."*

## **15 for 15**

Do you finally get in the groove after the *first half* of your lesson, and need just a little more time to figure out how to get things right? We are offering, during the slower times of the day (Mon - Fri, 9AM - 2PM) 15 extra minutes of lesson time for \$15 dollars. If your instructor is available, the extra time can be just the ticket to boost your confidence. Contact the office within 24 hours of your lesson to see if the 15 for 15 is available for *your* next lesson!

## **Spring Down Riding Clubs**

For those that are at an intermediate level of riding and want to get to the details of horsemanship and riding to your next level, Robin Elsineitti is looking at offering a weekly club/camp on Sundays from 1PM - 3PM for those who are interested. Talk to Robin around the barn and let her know you would like to participate!

Are you interested in being a part of a group of fun loving horse people? Send Lisa Bailey an email at [uchimama99@hotmail.com](mailto:uchimama99@hotmail.com) for your interest. She is looking for riders that would give her input, ideas and ways to get this club started.

## **Welcome to New Barn Cats at Spring Down**

- Raisin
- Daisy
- Dandy
- Samson
- Patch
- Mai Tai

## **Welcome New Spring Down Employees!**

Spring Down is pleased to welcome several new employees to our wonderful staff! Jennifer Dekkar and Lisa Nielson have joined Dianne Garcia to complete the office staff - those amazing folks who keep Spring Down up and running with all their behind the scenes expertise. These folks work very hard to manage not only the lesson programs at Spring Down, but all the other events, and all the tasks necessary to manage an equestrian center. Jennifer and Lisa are both wonderful additions to our office, and we welcome them.

Also joining our staff of instructors is Robyn Ogilvie, a talented young equestrian who brings her bright smile and enthusiasm to work every day at Spring Down. Robyn is a new full time employee, so she will be available both Saturdays and Sundays, as well as Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to meet your lesson needs. Please see the office to schedule time with Robyn.

### **Are you ready to join a group?**

A frequently asked question is "When will I (or my child) be able to join a group?" There is no one answer to that question, because every person, no matter how young or old, learns skills at a different rate. In my experience as an instructor, the time may vary from just a few months, to over a year or more. But, there are a few key criteria from which we instructors judge whether or not joining a group is feasible:

- 1) Can you get your horse out of the stall to the arena, and back again after the lesson SAFELY AND CORRECTLY? Parents, a hint to expedite this process for your smaller child is to learn how to do this too so that you can assist your child. There can sometimes be 6 or 7 folks in a group, and one instructor can not help everyone in the group to and from the stall.
- 2) You must be able to check and tighten your girth, and also adjust your stirrups MOSTLY BY YOURSELF. This does not mean that your instructor will not help you at all, but it DOES mean that you must make a good effort to get as much done by yourself as you can.
- 3) You must have good skills at mounting the horse safely.
- 4) You must be able to do a posting trot ON THE RAIL BY YOURSELF WITHOUT MUCH ASSISTANCE. This includes being able to start, stop, and steer by yourself.
- 5) Do you know how close you can safely get to the horse in front of you? Do you know what to do if you think you will get too close, i.e. pass safely, cut across the arena, or circle safely? Your instructors can assist with your refining these skills, but the basic knowledge and ability must be there.
- 6) A basic understanding of posting diagonals is necessary. Of course, your instructor will continue to help you with this skill, but it must be understood by the rider.
- 7) Do you know how to dismount safely by yourself? Your instructor can not assist everyone in a group without taking too much time away from the lesson.

There are, to recap, lots of requirements for being able to join a group. The bottom line for the necessity of these requirements is to ensure the safety of all the riders. Remember, there is only one instructor in a group, so each rider must possess the basic riding skills to ride responsibly and safely.

### **Do you want to jump?**

Our goal at Spring Down is to help people to acquire the skills to do whatever type of riding interests them. Jumping is one part of the equestrian experience, and although it can be very exciting, it is also very demanding and challenging.

It is essential that you have mastered your flat work before you start jumping. After all, jumping

is really advanced flat work with obstacles. Having solid flat skills is vital for your safety and security.

The following guidelines provide the minimum essentials that are required before you are able to safely and securely start jumping:

- 1) Must be able to maintain good balance, steering, and control of the horse at all gaits: walk, trot, and canter.
- 2) Must be able to walk and trot without stirrups. The instructor should not notice any difference in leg position or effectiveness with or without stirrups.
- 3) Two-point seat must be strong and balanced, with the ability to do poles at the trot and canter.
- 4) Must be able to stay in two-point seat at the canter three times around the indoor arena, or one time around the big, jumping arena.
- 5) Must be able to execute circles at the canter effectively.
- 6) Must be able to drop and regain stirrups at all gaits.
- 7) Must know diagonals and leads.
- 8) Must have a basic knowledge of simple and flying lead changes.

### **Drill Team Update**

The Spring Down Drill Team, "Spring Down Rhythm 'N Blues" is planning to perform at our next horse show on December 7th. These dedicated groups of riders come to Spring Down at 8AM every Saturday and Sunday morning to practice with their coach, Carol Goodstein. For those of you who do not know, drill teams are, basically, horses and riders performing maneuvers, sometimes very complicated maneuvers, to music in a choreographed routine.

Riding in a drill team teaches you many riding skills, and you are having so much fun "dancing" with your horse, that you are not even aware how much you are learning!! Carol is currently looking for more members for "Spring Down Rhythm 'N Blues", so please consider joining this wonderful team. Contact the office if you are interested, and they will make it happen.

The current members of the Saturday advanced drill team are as follows: Kris Clark -Hahn, Ronnie Eaton, Nicole Elsineitti, Maureen Kelly, Deb Lyons, Laurel Saldinger, Kelcy Senz, and Tracy Tilley. Thank you for a wonderful performance at our last horse show!

The current members of the Sunday team are as follows: Bea Depuydt, Nicole Elsineitti, Larry Feirman, Nandi Gunning, Lauren Morgenthaler, Jan Reed, and Cathy Siegel.

### **Folger Stable Project Restoration**

This excerpt was taken from the most recent newsletter from the Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks, in reference to the Folger Estate Stable.

*In October 2004 the first contribution was made to launch the beginning of our campaign*

*to renovate the historic Folger Stable in Wunderlich Park. It was an arduous task, but with the support of over 635 contributors, we succeeded in reaching our goal. Almost four years to the date, construction on the renovation project is about to begin. Over the next twelve months the 100 year old Folger Stable will be made structurally sound and substantially refurbished to allow it to continue to be used as it was originally intended for the use and enjoyment of future generations. In addition to horse boarding, the refurbished carriage room will house an exhibit featuring a revolving display of antique carriages and relevant historical information pertaining to the history of the stable and our equestrian heritage.*

*For more information about the second part of the vision...to raise on-going income to provide for the long term maintenance needs of the facility and for programming, please contact the office at:*

*(650) 851-2660*

*Or, you can visit the website at:*

*[www.parksupport.org](http://www.parksupport.org)*

## **Mommy and Me**

This program has turned out to be a smashing success. It is a series of 3 classes designed to introduce the smallest member of your family to horses while spending some quality time with Mom or Dad. As a group, you'll be introduced to safety, horse's ground manners, and you will get comfortable around horses. We'll teach you all about their special equipment, grooming and tacking up, and learning to ride. Each class may include the use of a vaulting horse, grooming, a riding lesson, and a special lesson about some aspect of horsemanship, geared to the little ones.. The series is a scheduled class, so look for upcoming dates!

Please see the office for more info.

- Session 1: 1/13, 1;20, 1/27
- Session 2: 2/2, 2/9, 2/23
- Session 3: 3/3, 3/10, 3/17

SDEC times for this class are scheduled from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. If you have capability for registering through Park and Rec in Redwood City, Los Altos, and San Carlos, there may be availability to sign up for the earlier group from 10:00AM - 11:30 PM. You must register through Park and Rec to get into this time slot.

## **We Get Letters**

The following are excerpts from some of the many letters that we receive in support of Spring Down:

*The show last weekend at Spring Down was my first, and I noticed some things I would like to share with you. I came up to the barn Saturday afternoon to clean Amigo's saddle and bridle, and noticed all the kids. I usually only go to Spring Down for my lessons, either Thursday morning or Friday morning, so never really realized how many kids take lessons.*

*I shared Amigo with an 11 year old girl, Alisha, who was already at the barn when I arrived at 6:45 AM. All of Alisha's friends introduced themselves to me, almost like I was "one of the girls", which was fun for me because I don't have any daughters, or nieces who live close by. They were all very supportive of each other, and me.*

*In fact, everyone at the show, whether they were from Spring Down or trailered in, was incredibly supportive. It was a great environment to be in. I know I don't have any experiences to compare last weekend with, but I wonder if other local barns have that kinds of friendly, supportive environment. Maybe to a degree, but I think that is probably what sets Spring Down apart from the others.*

Debbie Hotter

*My experience riding in Drill Team last Saturday left me so exhilarated, confident, and proud that I needed to send you this "Thank You" letter! I don't know if Roxy has learned a lot or I have learned a lot in the past year (probably a combination!) but I certainly had a much better ride with her than I had a year ago.*

*The first time I was assigned Roxy in Drill Team was about a year ago, and it went something like this...I tried my best to keep her under control at the canter in our first canter circle of the routine, but I could tell that I was getting nervous and did not know quite what to do to keep the situation from escalating. Only about 3 minutes into the ride, you wisely stopped the music and asked me to get off Roxy and we all had the rare pleasure of seeing you, Carol, mount Roxy and ride her for the rest of the routine.*

*Well, last Saturday ( about a year later) I was assigned Roxy again in Drill Team. As I lead her into the ring, I reminded myself of all of your lessons that you have taught me over this time:*

*#1)I am in charge. I am the Alpha Mare.*

*#2)Establish the relationship from the ground.*

*#3)Keep the horse's head down. If you have control of the head, you have the horse's brain.*

*#4)Give the horse constant direction. Horses can only think of one thing at a time.*

*#5)Ride the back end.*

*#6)Use your voice to remind the horse to pay attention.*

*Our drill team went through the ride twice that day, and Roxy stayed at my command. She flowed nicely through the routine and responded immediately to my aids and reminders to keep her pretty little nose down and to move on at the trot, then canter, to bend on the circles, and halt in the Company Front. I felt a little nervous inside, thinking to myself that perhaps there would be a repeat of a year ago. But the difference this day was that I had a whole toolkit of techniques (Carol's Lessons) that I knew about and, equally important, knew how to deploy those techniques to get the results I needed from that cute little Quarter Horse.*

Deb Lyons

**Visit [www.springdown.com](http://www.springdown.com) to learn more!**

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