



Spring Down Low Down Newsletter

The newsletter of Spring Down Equestrian Center

Vol.6, Issue 1

Spring & Summer 2009

Welcome

Summer is here, and with it comes a break from school, and more time to ride, ride, ride! Who needs a vacation when you can come out to Spring Down and refresh your spirit while spending time with your wonderful equine friends and companions. Spring Down's horses are here to help you wile away your summer hours while improving your riding skills. Come visit our little piece of heaven in Portola Valley...we are open every day during the year except for Christmas, New Year's Day, and Thanksgiving so that you can experience the joy of riding horses whenever you like.

Summer also brings fun with our fantastic [camps](#), [riding clinics](#), [tack up clinics](#), [mini camps](#), and many other fun events. At the end of the summer, Spring Down's owners, Carol and Stan Goodstein will host a barn BBQ...and everyone from the Spring Down community is invited. Please read ahead in this newsletter for more details about this 25th anniversary celebration for Spring Down.

[Horse Show](#) Updates

Spring Down had it's March show despite some uncooperative weather. The weather prior to the show had been beautiful, warm, and sunny, but just before the show, it turned cold and rainy. Our wonderful [new arena](#) can withstand any rain shower, however, so we were able to carry on despite a few showers.

Spring Down riders represented the majority of our competitors in this show, with just a handful of riders from outside barns. To try to increase the outside rider contingent, we came up with the idea to have a raffle for any non-Spring Down riders who pre-registered for the show. Also, we tried very hard to get the word out there via advertising, internet, and other sources.

To our great delight, the number of exhibitors in our June show greatly exceeded our expectations. Of course, we had a good turn out from our Spring Down folks, as usual. We also had an outstanding showing of outside riders as well, and we at Spring Down would like to thank everyone who came to our show from another barn! We have tried very hard recently to make the local horse community aware of

the value and worth of our shows, with an intensive campaign including advertising, incentives, web site information, and other promotional avenues.

Again, a big thank you to our local horse community for supporting our show. Please continue to support Spring Down, as we in the horse community need to all stick together and help each other to keep this great sport alive and well in Portola Valley and neighboring communities.

Of course, it is necessary to thank all of the folks who volunteer at our shows from the bottom of our hearts. It is a fact that these events could not take place without your help. There are too many of you to name here, but you all know who you are. Thank you, thank you, thank you!! We are always looking for more folks to volunteer at our shows, so if you are interested, please let Diane Allison know.

Our next [horse show](#) will be Sunday, September 20th, 2009.

Tack Sale

Spring Down is Spring Cleaning for the year and will be having a large tack sale very soon. We have not yet determined a date, but look out for the flyers around the barn and in town, and tell your friends in the community. There will be many nice saddles, pads, blankets, and useful pieces of horse equipment to choose from. The best part is that Spring Down is donating 10 percent of the proceeds to [NCEFT \(National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy\)](#) in Woodside.

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.

Nacho is in pretty good spirits, but it would be wonderful if anyone from the Spring Down community could take the time to drop him a card or a letter. Nacho loves to get mail from his Spring Down friends, and it would continue to keep his spirits high knowing he still has support and folks who care about him back here at Spring Down.

Last we heard, it was possible that Nacho might be released somewhere around the month of October. It is still thought that he will be deported back to Mexico at this time.

Please write to Nacho at the following address:

Ignacio Hernandez Flores

CDC #G07280

Ord 315 CMF

PO Box 2000

Vacaville, CA 95696

Welcome to New Horses at Spring Down

- Party
- Sally

Welcome to New Barn Cats at Spring Down

- Stormy

[Drill Team](#) Updates

The Spring Down [Drill Team](#), "[Spring Down Rhythm 'N Blues](#)" performed outstandingly well at our last [horse show](#) on June 7th. Both the Saturday and Sunday team performed under the tutelage of their coach, [Carol Goodstein](#). For those of you who do not know, drill teams are, basically, horses and riders performing maneuvers and patterns, often in pairs, 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:

- Britta Buenhemann
- Kris Clark-Hahn
- Maureen Kelly
- Deb Lyons
- Laurel Saldinger
- Kelcy Senz
- ...and Tracy Tilley,
with Hicole Elsineitti and Hailey Roake as alternates

The current members of the Sunday team are as follows:

- Alecia Cairo
- Bea Depuyot
- Nandi Gunning
- Barb Palmer
- Jan Reed
- ...and Cathy Siegel
with Nicole Elsineitti, Laurel Saldinger, Kelcy Senz, and Monica Van Luven as alternates

Tack Up Clinic

Spring Down will be continuing to offer group [tack-up clinics](#) on a monthly basis. The lessons are scheduled typically Sundays, 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 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.

The next tack up Clinic is July 18th. Learn how to properly groom, tack up your horse and do it with confidence every time! If you are a regular rider at Spring Down and are old enough to take a tack up lesson (typically 12 years old) then we strongly recommend this. Otherwise, it is our policy to charge \$10 for tacking up the horse, and \$10 for untacking the horse. Of course, if you are too young to tack up safely, then we will continue to tack and untack for you at no charge. If you are able to tack up your horse for a lesson and you choose not to due to time constraints or other reasons, then we will need to charge as well.

News from the Office

As we get into summer schedules, please remember that Spring Down has a 24 hour cancellation policy. If you do not cancel with 24 hours notice by [speaking live with an office person](#), 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: \(2009\)](#)

September 20th

December 6th

[SUMMER CAMP IS HERE!! \(2009\)](#)

June 15th - June 26th

July 6th - July 17th

July 20th - July 31st

August 3rd - August 14th

August 17th - August 28th

(It is possible to do one week of the camp if that is all your schedule will allow.)

INTERMEDIATE CAMP: (2009)

June 15th - June 18th

June 22nd - June 26th

August TBD

(To participate in the intermediate camp, riders should be capable of basic, beginning jumping, or at least VERY close to it.)

NICK CLINICS: (2009)

June 30th, July 1st & 2nd

October 6th, 7th, & 8th

SPRING DOWN BARN PARTY

August 30th

2PM

Celebrate SD's 25th anniversary!!!

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 about horse behavior, and of course, RIDING! Be sure to sign up early as this program is very popular!

Remaining 2009 DATES:

6/20,7/25,8/29,8/12

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.

Happy Horse Camp

Caroline Warde, one of Spring Down's wonderful instructors, offers a "[Happy Horse Camp](#)" on occasion. In this camp, Caroline will review different aspects of riding, horsemanship, horse care and equipment...and make it all incredibly fun and easy to learn.

Come join Caroline and make some new horse friends at one of the next scheduled "Happy Horse Days!" Adults are welcome...several adults have done this program already with rave reviews. The classes will be tailored to the level of the participants as best as possible.

These camps are held on Saturdays, and the next Happy Horse Day is scheduled for July 18th - so sign up and get a place in this special event!!

Spring Down News and Notes

Spring Down Barn Party

Carol and Stan Goodstein will be hosting a Barn Party for everyone in the Spring Down community to celebrate their 25th anniversary of owning and operating Spring Down Equestrian Center. This is an amazing couple who is extremely dedicated to the pursuit of making it possible to give anyone who has the interest and inclination to learn how to ride and care for a horse, the opportunity to do so. In today's economic climate, this is certainly a Herculean task, and one that can not go unnoticed. To say "thank you" to everyone who has supported them over these years, there will be a celebration with food, music, and dancing...

so be there to join in the fun!!

Sunday, August 30th

2PM - 7PM

Main dish, green salad, and drinks will be provided, and of course there will be cake!!!

Everyone is invited to bring a finger food or hors d'oeuvre to share.

Horses for Sale

Sky is for sale: Handsome palomino gelding. 15 year old Registered QH, 16 hands, sweet disposition, finished hunter, experienced in eventing, and automatic lead changes.

Asking \$12.5 K.

Please [inquire at the office](#) if you are interested in purchasing this horse.

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 in the fall.

Sally Swift Dies

Sally Swift garnered a world-wide audience for sensitive horsemanship with what she called "Centered Riding." Borrowing from such body-awareness disciplines as the Alexander Technique and tai chi, Centered Riding stresses balance, breathing and visualization to meld rider and horse. In her popular book, "Centered Riding", Sally has such advice as, "You can breathe a horse to quietness." The book and a follow-up, "Centered Riding II", sold more than 800,000 copies in 15 languages.

Ms. Swift's techniques have been compared to Zen or Yoga on horseback. They stemmed in part from her own awareness of body mechanics owing to a childhood condition, scoliosis. From the age of 8, Sally was encouraged to use riding as a therapy because it "used both sides of my body equally."

Ms. Swift continued to instruct riders into her 90s in Guilford, Vermont. She said in a Horse and Rider interview that two things could bring tears to her eyes, one of which was a beautiful performance on a horse.

Ms. Swift, who was heralded as "a quiet ambassador for a more harmonious connection between horse and rider..." died April 2nd at the age of 95.

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.

Regarding the one rein stop, just remember:

"If you can stop the right side of the horse, then the left side can't run away!"

- Carol Goodstein

We Get Letters

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

~~~~~

*Hello Carol,*

*Thank you for a wonderful day at your equestrian center. For most, this was the first time our girls had ever mounted a horse. Thank you for making it such a pleasurable experience for them and for helping them understand the nature of the beautiful animal.*

*Thank you again!*

*Jeanie*

~~~~~

Dear Carol,

Thank you for taking the time to teach my boys (Drew and John) about horseback riding. It has been an experience that they will always remember and you taught them to respect such magnificent creatures. Your work is so important and I am just grateful that my sister Maria was gracious enough to set it up. You have clearly made an impact on my boys, and for that I thank you.

*All the best,
Juan Orozco*

P.S. You are doing a great Job teaching my niece Cecilea Coleman how to ride. She will appreciate that all her life.

~~~~~

*Our horsemanship outing to Spring Down was definitely the high point of this school year. The girls had a fantastic time and are still talking about the horses nonstop, nearly a month later. Thank you for a fun, educational and safe experience. I am happy to be a reference to any other troop leaders who are considering doing this.*

*Jennifer McLean*

~~~~~

The troop worked together on a thank you letter, and here it is:

Dear Spring Down,

It was very nice of you to let us ride your horses.

We LOVED riding the horses. We really liked how you taught us how to ride, how to put saddles on the horses, and learning how to clean their hooves. It was cool how you ride when you jump, we liked learning our two point. We liked learning all about the horses and what everything was called like the parts of their bodies and their colors.

We liked seeing the jumping ring and all the horses. It was interesting to see how the horses were in their stalls and how they were very curious and always stick their heads out.

Our favorite horses were Dina, Cleo, and Butterscotch of course. All the horses have very cool names. Our favorite names were Oreo and Risky. We also liked making the picture frames.

Love, Cipriani Third Gd. Brownie Troop 31

P.S. The cats were cool, too!!

Visit www.springdown.com to learn more!

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