

OrthoHorse© Newsletter

Newsletter about Ortho-Bionomy© - bodywork for equines and humans & related topics
Issue 4

July/August 2011



People got really creative this summer in finding places to ride that were not off-limits and attending the great clinics that were offered.

New to our family is granddaughter Ariana's horse, Patches (registered name Double Dee Bear), a 14-year-old Tobiano Paint gelding who has had an illustrious career as a show and therapeutic riding horse.

As I say in each issue, for those not yet familiar with Ortho-Bionomy, it is a form of bodywork based on structure derived from osteopathy, that works with and relies on the body's self corrective capacity. It is not a replacement for veterinary or medical care, but can complement it.

My videos will give you a glimpse of what demos look like. See videos by searching for

OrthoHorse on YouTube or go to my website – www.susith.com/orthohorse

Here are direct links to the videos:

[Lily's Movement Assessment Before & After](#)

[Ortho-Bionomy© Sessions](#)

[Equine Respiration During Wildfire Season](#)

[Bodywork demo – Dandi, a young Andalusian](#)

[Mustang Kodi](#)

[OrthoHorse - Donkey receives bodywork](#)

If you are interested you can subscribe to receive notices when one has been posted.

This issue features a recap of the EPR Institute's Horse & Rider clinic and EPR IV Class with Zarna Carter, mention of the Buck Brannaman film, with a link to an interview I did with Ray Hunt for Western Horseman in 2004, and a piece on the Carolyn Resnick

Waterhole Rituals online clinic I attended in June-July.



The Equine Positional Release Institute's first ever Horse & Rider Clinic held on July 17 featuring international EPR and Equine Ortho-Bionomy instructor and homeopath Zarna Carter and myself went very well – 14 people attended, some bringing their horses! Many thanks to all those in attendance. For those who couldn't come, keep in touch to find out about future events.

One of the reasons we wanted to hold the clinic was to increase awareness of horse and rider partnerships. Some of my clients had expressly asked for a class to learn how to do some bodywork on their own horses in a one-half or one-day format. We added some human bodywork and work with horse & rider because before we even start working on the horse, it is best to feel it in our own body. A lot of us ride without noticing – we know the horse is not tracking right – but where is it? We even ask others, is he lame on the right or left fore leg? Even in assessing a lameness situation, I will take in the information that one leg is sore and not hitting the ground right, but it could be this is very much affected by the hindquarters or some other part of the body.

But the bodywork is not about just lameness. Have you ever noticed how good trainers will be able to jump on just about any horse and have that horse come up into them, and ride it as if they had been partners for years? It is sometimes maddening to watch when they get on your beloved horse, however, we can have

this type of relationship. Although these trainers may not know Ortho-Bionomy, they know it without the name – they know how to make that magic connection. This is what we are trying to achieve with the horse and rider work.

Increasing awareness of our connection with the horse is the key to our eventual understanding.

I went out riding one morning recently on my 22-year-old gelding, Khami. I hadn't ridden him myself in awhile as my friend has been riding him. I noticed that his knees were very sore, and his left hind leg stiff starting out. In the clinic Zarna had determined that he wasn't putting his right hind foot squarely on the ground, and made some changes for that.

I could feel right away the sore knees, a little extra "click" in the movement of them and how the hind legs were tracking. I felt the synchronicity of the hips moving the hind legs forward – and asked myself – is that even? Even though the right hind had been the one to not hit the ground right during the clinic, now it seemed that the left hind was just not tracking forward. How was my body responding to this unevenness? As I hadn't been on him for awhile, I knew that I had not influenced his movement.

In other situations, we can be good riders but not connecting fully in the saddle. Sometimes one side of the pelvis is just not sitting in the saddle, sit bones not meeting the leather, one thigh turned laterally instead of sitting cozy and flush against the horse. When practicing on the rider, we will work with exploration of movement of the leg, foot or pelvis or even shoulders to find a preferred position, one that makes the rider more comfortable, connected and balanced in the saddle.

For some taking our clinic, it was their first exposure to Ortho-Bionomy bodywork on themselves and giving to another being. As horse people, it is our job to be able to feel things if we're going to work on our horse. It takes time and a special attention to feel things, but as riders we have the opportunity to be tuned in to the feel of the horse in a certain way which gives us an edge over those people who don't live with and ride horses.

Although we look at our horses every day, and we might notice a soreness here or there, being on their backs gives us a lot of new information. On my morning ride I could actually feel which parts were crying out for attention. I could work on some areas while in the saddle, but I could also go back to the barn and work on those areas, bringing some relief to the sore spots, helping them move toward self-correction. It also made me aware of places in my body that may need attention.

Ortho-Bionomy asks that we expand our horizons – from feeling our horse and whether he is obviously stumbling or lame, we expand it to feel more subtle changes, deepening the connection by going inward.

It is much easier to understand the visible than the invisible. In holding this clinic, I remembered my first introduction to the work – sometimes I wondered if I had imagined it, and sometimes I was really in the moment, able to see the results of my work on a horse or human – an “obvious” shift in gait, a softness in the eye, a lightness in the body that wasn't there before. When I felt it in my own body, it reinforced what I was beginning to see in others.

I was very excited by our clinic and the engagement and knowledge the participants all brought to it.

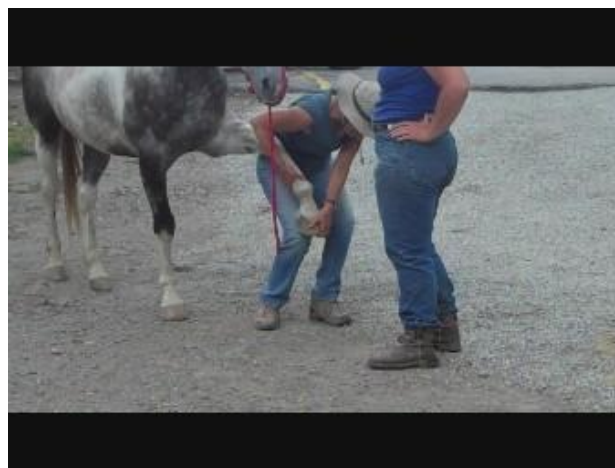
Equine Positional Release IV

Held in Santa Fe at Rancho Mariposa, the last in a series of four courses on Equine Positional Release (EPR) by Zarna Carter entitled “Strong Structures and Motion” took place over the August 6-7 weekend.

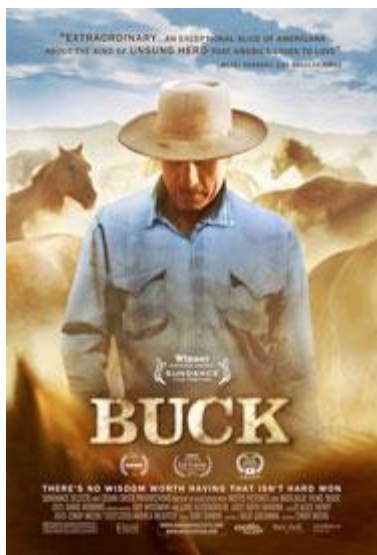
The course covered an extensive amount of equine anatomy and the origins of various conditions, as well as creative exercises to approach different structural problems in the horse.

Work also extended to in-the-saddle, finding what helps the horse move differently.

This series is ideal for those students who want to deepen their knowledge of EPR into the realm of practice. I have also taken EPR 1 “Exploring Assessment, Technique and Response” which presents sound structural education in the work. [EPR Ortho website](#)



“Extensor tendon exercise”, Wolf Creek, Colorado.



Buck the Movie

By now just about everyone who loves horses has seen the film “Buck” about Buck Brannaman. I’ve also spoken to some people who aren’t that interested in horses, who loved the movie. It was a happy surprise to see a documentary about such a fine natural horseman get to the big screen. We have many fine horsemen in our area who have studied either with Buck, Ray Hunt and others, and the methods of horse training are familiar. It was also great to see early film clips of Ray Hunt, which I’d never seen before.

Buck was a student of Ray Hunt, and I include here a [Ray Hunt Interview](#) from *Western Horseman* in June, 2004 conducted when he held a clinic at Turk Arabians in Las Vegas, NM.



Carolyn Resnick Waterhole Rituals I

I have just completed a six-week online course on Carolyn Resnick’s Waterhole

Rituals, which is the first course of her Liberty Training for horses. The training is based on Carolyn’s early work spending time with herds of horses, where she studied their behavior and developed ways that people could interact with horses in a way that makes it possible for horses and people to form healthy bonds beyond riding and training. In the wild, horses learn to fit in, lead, play, and experience creativity, and seek these things throughout their lives. We can connect with them on all these levels. It doesn’t matter how old the horses are, according to Carolyn.

This course involved a phone meeting every other week for six sessions, whereby Carolyn would give a lecture on the next Ritual and then participants would call in and talk to her.

At the first session, participants were encouraged to send videos of themselves working with their horses on the various “rituals.” Also there was an opportunity throughout class for the group to ask questions on the blog.

It was amazing to me how much could be accomplished in this online format. We could see the changes in our body language and energies as we progressed through class, and received direction on where to go next with our horses. We started out originally working with one horse, but for those of us with more than one, somehow we ended up working with them as well, basically because we are learning to understand herd dynamics. Carolyn was enormously generous with her time and has an incredible eye for noticing what is working and not working in a horse/human relationship, and how to progress. Everyone worked at their own pace.

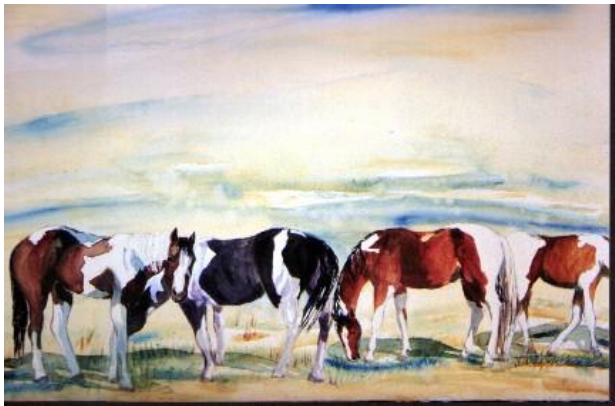
This is a course for serious students, trainers and horse professionals. Participants need to have a horse to work with. Carolyn herself has just bought a young horse that will be the subject of an upcoming video series.

I'm attending a week-long clinic at Carolyn's ranch in Escondido, California in December.

This work is very complementary to Equine Ortho-Bionomy and I'm exploring ways of using the two together.

Carolyn's [website and blog](#) contain a lot of free information. She will be posting some of the videos I made during class for future classes.

[One with the Herd](#)



Paint Collection

ODDS & ENDS

[Liberty Horse Training](#) Robin Gates

[Introduction to the Natural Feeder](#)
[Acclimation to the Natural Feeder](#)

Available at Desert Wind Saddlery.
505.474.7795
lorraine@desertwindsaddlery.com

READING & WATCHING LIST

[High Desert Horses on Middle Tennessee Grasses](#) by Joe Camp, *The Horses Hoof*

[Summer Riding: When the Rider is Hot, the Horse is Hotter](#) *TheHorse.com* by University of Guelph

[Fires & Horses](#) *UC Davis* report

[Training Tip of the Week: Post for Better Balance](#) Clinton Anderson, *DownUnder Horsemanship*

[Fire in Pacheco Canyon by Eldon Reyer, BackCountry Horseman Incident Report](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

4 - Caja del Rio Endurance Ride 25/50 miles
[Ride information](#)

13 - Equine Ortho-Bionomy Demo for Back Country Horseman's Association 6 pm Sherriff's Posse Building, Rodeo Grounds. Susan Smith to give free demonstration of Equine Ortho-Bionomy bodywork. Details to follow. Contact: Julie Bain fsjulie@gmail.com or Susan Smith susith@aol.com

23- 29 Art Grunig, champion reiner & author of Reflex Balancing bodywork technique: in Santa Fe offering working with cows, private lessons, bodywork. Contact Maryann Menetrey 660-5815 maryann.menetrey@state.nm.us

August

27 - 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. - Fundraiser To Benefit the family of Dixon's Apple Orchard - [La Tienda at Eldorado](#) - Santa Fe

[Dixon Apple Orchard ride](#)

August 15-October 8 - office hours extended: Mondays-Wednesdays and Friday mornings.

6-7 EPR IV, *Rancho Mariposa*, Santa Fe, NM USA [EPR Ortho website](#)

For more information on Ortho-Bionomy and additional work, see

www.susith.com/orthohorse

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