

## OrthoHorse© Newsletter

*Newsletter about Ortho-Bionomy®, Equine Positional Release (EPR) ® - bodywork & related topics such as the Carolyn Resnick Method ® of Horsemanship, natural horse care and horsemanship for equines and humans*

**"The animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours, they move finished and complete, gifted with extension of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren; they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth."**  
~Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*, 1928.

**October/November/December 2012  
Issue 10**

*Thinking of animals as other nations helps us recognize the language gulf between us and our responsibility to bridge that gap.*

*Studying horse language helps to further knowledge and create a true energetic connection with horses.*

*Ortho-Bionomy was designed for people. If we are to practice this on horses, then understanding their language is essential. Zarna Carter's Equine Positional Release ® EPR is designed specifically for horses, adapted from Ortho-Bionomy for that purpose.*



*As I say in each issue, for those not yet familiar with Ortho-Bionomy®, it is a non-force 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.*

Check out my new blog <http://www.horsesatliberty.wordpress.com/>

*My videos will give you a glimpse of recent work. See videos by searching for OrthoHorse® on YouTube or go to my website – [www.orthohorse.info](http://www.orthohorse.info)  
You can subscribe to receive notices when one has been posted.*



## **Launch of EPR Tutors in Santa Fe By Zarna Carter**

Equine Positional Release Institute held the first time EPR Tutor run Study Group this Fall in Santa Fe

The EPR Institute is very proud to expand its class base by having two local

EPR tutors, Mary Ann Menetrey and Susan Smith.

Mary Ann a qualified EPR Practitioner, a long term resident of the Santa Fe or Espanola area, is a long time horse woman having spent many years riding and studying horsemanship, who brings a wealth of horse and people skills to the class. Susan Smith is an Ortho-Bionomy Instructor Trainee and Advanced Practitioner, Liberty work trainer and Journalist and a long time resident of Santa Fe. Susan brings her passion for non-force training and bodywork coupled with her experience of endurance competition into the class room.

On October 20th, the Fall Study Group was held at a local ranch. Our topic was "Movement toward Ease," which is one of the principles of Equine Positional Release . Under that umbrella, we addressed questions on how to work with the poll, ribs and some leg lifts using two demo horses. Mary Ann did a great assessment on the spine as a way to gather information on the horse.

Questions as to what Ortho-Bionomy exercises we could use with people were also asked. Susan demonstrated wrist and fingers, as well as first rib release and shoulder shrug. This human work gives a personal and body experience of the work and is useful to show people how the work can affect their horses.

Study groups are a 2 hour block in which questions are answered and information is presented, i.e. going into more details about specific techniques, assessment exercises, how to write up case notes, how to explain EPR to clients, horse people, etc.

Zarna Carter, founder of the Equine Positional Release Institute based at Zuma Creek Station near Wilmington, South Australia, is an internationally acclaimed instructor of EPR and Ortho-Bionomy. For more information about Zarna and EPR see [www.eprortho.com](http://www.eprortho.com).

## Fistulous Wither Case Study

By Susan Smith

I treated a young Paso Fino mare recently who was diagnosed with fistulous withers. Fistulous withers is described as a chronic inflammatory skin disease that can have pus-filled areas and swelling on the horse's withers. The swelling is called a "fistula" and can also extend beyond the withers, into the shoulder and neck. It is similar to a condition known as "poll evil," which is located at the poll where the head meets the neck.



Wither after first treatment

Symptoms can include:

- Wither swelling
- Heat in the wither area
- Holes and tracts in the withers
- Build up of fluid in the withers
- A clear or yellow discharge from the wither area
- Fever and pain symptoms
- Sores
- Hair loss
- Sinus infection symptoms

Fistulous withers can be caused by infection, parasites, trauma to the withers, badly fitting saddle, overwork, overloading and/or poorly balanced loads. I have seen this condition with horses that have poorly fitting saddles and overwork mostly. Treatment can include a medication to drain the area, but the shoulder area does not have good drainage by itself.

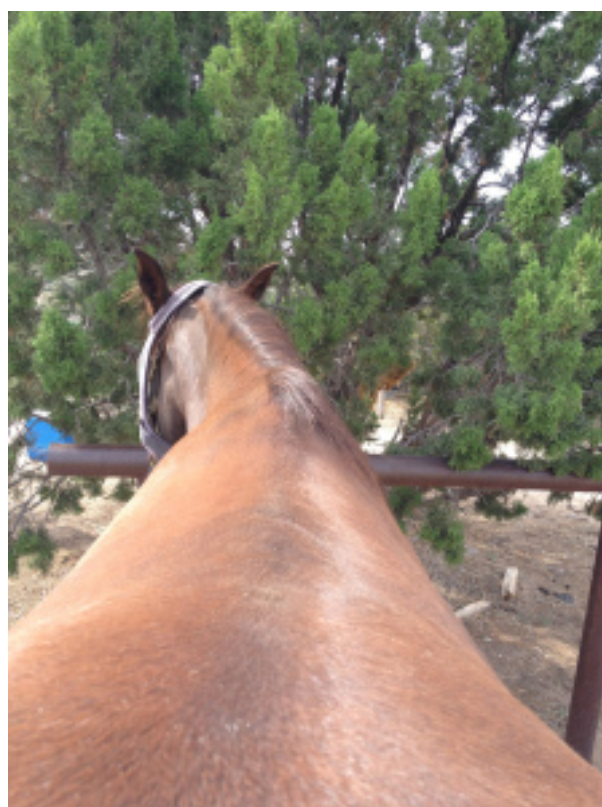


After a long trail ride, this mare's withers swelled up and did not get better. The wither did not show any discharge but did have fluid build up. The swelling went down after she was given a steroid injection and then came back again three weeks later. I looked at the saddle fit and determined that although the saddle appeared to fit, her owner said she had no sweat pattern in the middle of her back, so it was clearly bridging. It was also tight on the left side. It may have fit her fine before but not now.

Fitting saddles is hard for humans because we can only look and feel for the horse, we can't actually feel it ourselves. It's sort of like having someone look at you in a pair of shoes at the shoe store and say those shoes look like they fit. But you are in the shoes and you know they don't fit because they don't feel comfortable! The poor horse can't tell you this verbally; he can only flinch when you go to place the saddle on his back and if he's lucky, his body will do something visual to make you notice.



Before second treatment one week later



After second treatment one week later

I sensed that this condition stemmed from something deeper than just saddle fit, however, that perhaps the body was harboring some residual inflammation and it manifested itself in fistulous wither. When taking a history, I learned the mare had had a mild toxicity about five years prior. We can't be sure that had any bearing on the present situation, but it is something take note of in the global assessment.

I can't overemphasize the importance of bodywork in this situation. It can help the body rid itself of toxins and inflammation and infection.

In this case, after two sessions, the mare's inflammation had gone down to almost nothing. Her owner began riding her again. After a second ride, the withers erupted in inflammation, giving us a clear indicator that the saddle is the culprit in this situation. Although the owner had said the saddle had fit for many years without any problems, something has changed in the mare's chemistry and shape. Even without the history of toxicity, the issue of saddles suddenly not fitting is also very common! Age, work, chemistry changes, all conspire to change the shape of the horse. Sometimes white spots appear on the withers or spine or the wither area becomes hard, or the horse flinches when you put the saddle on. It's just like the shoes - one day you wake up and your favorite pair of shoes doesn't fit comfortably any more.

So determining what is soreing the horse, whether or not bodywork will help her wear a saddle comfortably, is a process of discovery between owner, practitioner and horse. The way I do saddle fit is as a holistic process starting with bodywork, examining all these factors, what work the horse is intended for, and what saddles might best suit the horse and rider.

My experience comes from fitting saddles for horses who are going to travel 50 miles or more in a day in an endurance ride. For that experience, a saddle has to fit well or the horse will be miserable and other physical problems will come up.

The back needs a chance to recover before trying on various saddles and carrying a rider. Some horses may be able to be ridden bareback during this time. Bodywork can speed up this process by strengthening the entire system, but it is best to wait to ride until the horse stops flinching and eyeballing the saddle like it's a monster.

The owner was very proactive and found a saddle that had an adjustable tree which fits her mare really well. Since then there have been no more wither swellings.

## **Carolyn Resnick Liberty Horsemanship Clinic, Oklahoma City "Waterhole Rituals."**

By Susan Smith

Hosted by certified Carolyn Resnick trainer, Ruella Yates, the two-day the Carolyn Resnick Waterhole Rituals Clinic held at Spirit Horse Ranch near Oklahoma City was an amazing event for all who attended. The clinic was followed by two days of lessons. The horses and people made great strides under Carolyn's tutelage. What I love about this method is that there is always something more to learn.



I brought my horse Patches to Oklahoma. Over the past year, Patches has survived a serious bout with pneumonia and some other physical problems, and I have only just begun having the children ride him again. During this time we have worked on the Waterhole Rituals a great deal because he loves them and responds beautifully. After my visit to Carolyn's "Beyond The Waterhole Rituals" clinic last December,

Carolyn taught the Waterhole Rituals using one mare who had not ever experienced them before, as well as some horses who had been trained in some or all of the rituals. It was interesting to see the evolution of each horse from where they were to who they could become in her hands. The two days of lessons following the clinic brought many wonderful surprises to those who have been practicing the rituals for awhile.



Since Patches and I had been asked to do a dancing demo, we did that. None of us were sure that Patches would dance with me; he had met a mare he fell in love with, the beautiful Sophie, a Thoroughbred-Draft cross, and he wanted to stay with her. I've never seen him get so attached to any one horse, although he is generally friendly and kind. Although Sophie is a bossy mare, by the end of our visit, Patches, who is always low man, was

leading her from behind and able to eat out of the same haybag with her sometimes. It was interesting to watch this herd behavior and relationship develop over the week.



Patches was amazing in our dancing demo, although he usually moves faster in the dance in his home environment and offers some leaping at times. In this clinic setting, he kept his attention with me. I did not lose him to the gate going back out to Sophie as I thought I might, rather he stayed and kept tempo with me as we had done together numerous times.



All the lessons were informative, not just my own. Watching what Carolyn thought to do with each horse, always in the moment, always spontaneous, taught me so much about trusting instincts rather than simply going with what I had known to be true ahead of time. Horses we worked with included a dominant leader, who had at one time been vicious to other horses, to a former carriage horse, to wild-spirited minis, a shy Welsh pony and a Paint, all of whom had previous ritual experience. They blossomed further with their owners and Carolyn.



Patches has been low man with the other horses he lives with and has been picked on, usually getting bites or kicks. Since he has come back from Oklahoma, no one has bothered him. I wonder if spending time with Sophie raised his self-esteem. My friend Claudia said that a long trip like that can also give horses confidence, so I'm guessing the entire experience has changed him for the better.

You can read Carolyn Resnick's account of the clinic on her blog <http://carolynresnickblog.com>

More on the clinic can be found at the Spirit Horse Ranch website <http://libertyfoundations.com>

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## Horses at Liberty Study Groups and Private Lessons

Over the winter months, Susan Smith will be offering Liberty Training Study Groups and private lessons in Santa Fe for those interested. If the weather is bad, we'll take the study group indoors and work on dynamics of energetics between horse and human, and assessing the horse's energy. We can watch videos of the work to see various ways of doing the Waterhole Rituals. If the weather is good, we can work outside on these points with a horse.

Students in various stages of their development can benefit; these groups will serve to strengthen our interactions as both human and horse.

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Equine Ortho-Bionomy + Liberty Training combine the body's self-corrective language with the language of the herd. They are a winning combination for keeping your equine athlete healthy and in "magnetic connection" with you. Contact me today to schedule an assessment that will cover these two approaches in one - [susansmith@orthohorse.info](mailto:susansmith@orthohorse.info)

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## Links

[Endurance Riders Secrets](#) The Trail Rider

[Gitte and her stallion](#) YouTube

[Wild Horses - Youtube](#)

## Reading List

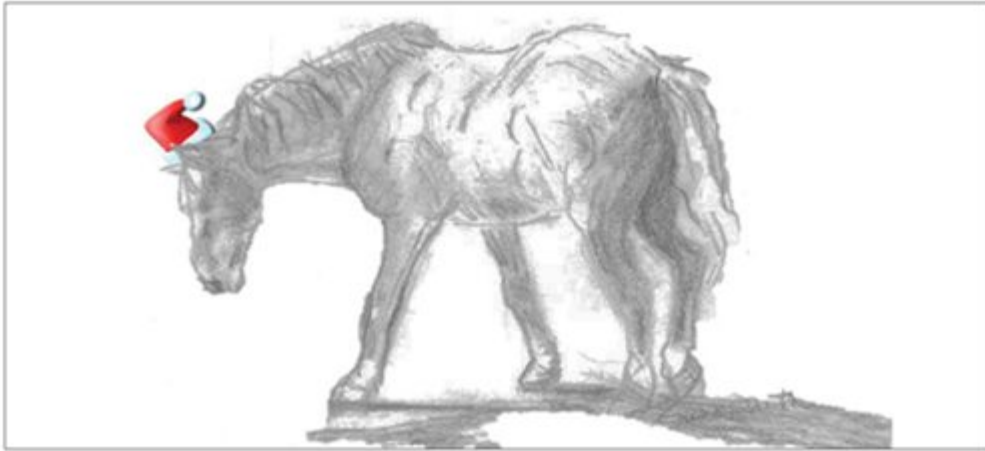
*Horse People – Scenes from the Riding Life*, by Michael Korda

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## Gift Certificates

All occasion Gift Certificates for Ortho-Bionomy for humans & equines available. Paypal welcome! Here are some examples:





Gift certificates can be used toward clinics, individual sessions, lessons, and other offerings by either OrthoHorse or Horses at Liberty.

Happy holidays, everyone!



## Calendar

### January

**8- Free video night** – Watch and comment on liberty training videos. Space is limited. Contact Susan Smith for details. 505-501-2478

### February

**TBA - EPR Study Group** – Santa Fe. Contact tutors Susan Smith or Mary Ann Menetrey for details. 505-501-2478 or 505-660-5815.

### March

**TBA - Liberty Training Clinic** – Susan Smith, in Santa Fe.

**9-10** Carolyn Resnick Certified Trainer Ruella Yates & Stina Herberg, a Carolyn Resnick Certified Trainer from the island of St. Vincent in the Caribbean present a 2-Day Liberty Training Clinic at Spirit Horse Ranch, near Oklahoma City. Contact Ruella at [ruella@libertyfoundations.com](mailto:ruella@libertyfoundations.com), 405-771-4274

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For more information on Ortho-Bionomy® or Liberty Training, demos, events, clinics, private sessions and tutorials, see  
[www.orthohorse.info](http://www.orthohorse.info)  
Facebook pages: OrthoHorse, Horses at Liberty  
Blog: <http://www.horsesatliberty.wordpress.com/>

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