



Riding Club Offers Foundation Horsemanship Clinic May 4, 5 and 6, 2007 at the Countryside Park District Riding Center

By Gail Baldwin and Kristina Anderson

The Riding Club is very pleased to sponsor an educational horsemanship clinic with Scott Wehrmann of Wehrmann Quarter Horses in Nebraska. Scott is a practitioner of foundation horsemanship who believes that riders of all ages and riding ability can achieve greater levels of mutual respect, trust and communication with their horses and ponies. Scott taught a well-received clinic in Barrington Hills at a private stable last November and is returning to teach an open clinic sponsored by the Riding Club at the Countryside Park District Riding Center on May 4, 5, and 6. As a special demonstration for us, Scott will also be starting two local 2-year-old homebred colts from Barrington Hills (a Thoroughbred/Paint cross and a warmblood he has never worked with before), and he anticipates that he or their owners will be able to ride them briefly for the very first time at the close of the Clinic!

But what, you may ask, is “foundation horsemanship”? It’s a concept that not many of us in Barrington Hills have had exposure to as we learned to jump, do dressage, or play polo. Many trace its origins to vaquero horsemanship and its followers in the western United States. The vaquero philosophy is to listen to the horse and try to figure out what he’s trying to tell you. As Scott puts it, “The basis for every horse's education is the same, no matter the breed, age, sex, intended use or discipline. From the very start, each new step builds upon the previous steps. No matter how good the intentions, how good the trainer is, how good the equipment or health care or environment, if the foundation is not solid, nothing else is going to be quite right. Just about every problem can be traced back to a hole, a step that got missed or something that didn't quite make sense to the horse or rider. To fix these problems, you just have to go back to the foundation. Very often when you work your way back up to the trouble spot, you find it doesn't exist at all anymore. This may take a few minutes, a few hours, a few days or weeks or years, depending on the person's feel, timing, and balance. But the solutions still have to start back at the foundation.”

Those of us who have watched Scott work know that his training style is exceptionally quiet, gentle, and concise, and it has proven to be very effective with all types and ages of horses. He offers no shortcuts, no gimmicky equipment, and no “ten easy steps to a perfect horse.” Never utilizing force or fear, these common sense methods will help the rider achieve partnership with his or her horse using the smallest of efforts based on the concepts of feel, timing, balance, release and reward. Scott’s work is heavily influenced by Tom and Bill Dorrance, Ray Hunt, and Buck Brannaman, who may be called practitioners of “foundation” horsemanship, “vaquero” horsemanship, or more loosely, “natural” horsemanship. If you don’t know these renowned horsemen, consider the words of Pulitzer-prize-winning author Jane Smiley, who has used the Dorrance methods with her Thoroughbreds:

“All training systems ask horses to yield to pressure, but it was Tom Dorrance's insight to see that the pressure should affect the horse's feet, which are small and quick, rather than his body, which is big and clumsy. The Dorrance method is based on the principle that if the rider controls when and how the horse's feet move, he achieves leadership over the horse with small effort and minimal confrontation. By the time [the trainer] had finished with my Thoroughbreds, they were well-mannered, confident and calm, generous and easygoing, the

way horses are when they know both what to expect and how to handle the unexpected.” (Los Angeles Times, Sept. 27, 2005).

Scott will offer day-long sessions in which each rider has a semi-private lesson in the Riding Center indoor arena, along with an intro session in the morning and a wrap-up session at each day’s end. Riders will be grouped based on the issues they want to address, and requests to be grouped together will be accommodated. Sessions will be tailored to each participant’s concerns and may include work in a round pen, groundwork or mounted work. Many people have asked to work on trailer-loading, so that will be an option as well. Riders are encouraged to stay the full day and continue to work with their horses after their lessons; at the day’s end Scott will check with each horse and handler to monitor their progress and assist them with any problems.

The price for clinic participants is \$75 for each day, which includes a semi-private session as well as full-day participation and auditing. Auditors are \$20 per day. Children under 12 are free. Please bring your own chair! Seating in the Riding Center is very limited. For more information, contact Gail Baldwin at 847.277.1228 or Kristina Anderson at 847.454.6824. To apply, fill in and mail the form that is printed in this newsletter and return to Kristina Anderson by **April 20**. We look forward to seeing you at this very special clinic!

Resources for further information on foundation and vaquero horsemanship and classical horsemanship, just to get you started:

www.wehrmannquarterhorses.com

www.latimes.com/features/printedition/outdoors/la-os-horse27sep27,1,7154191.story?page=2&coll=la-outdoors-printedition

www.applesnoats.com/classical.pdf

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED ALL 3 DAYS!

We need volunteers to help with set up, collecting registrations and audit fees, assisting with trailer parking, and making sure that stalls are left clean each day. Volunteers who donate ½ day of time will be allowed to audit for free all weekend, including at the colt starting demo! Contact Gail (847-277-1228) or Kristina (312-212-4272) to sign up.

SCOTT WEHRMANN FOUNDATION HORSEMANSHIP CLINIC REGISTRATION

May 4, 5 and 6, 2007
Barrington Countryside Park District Riding Center—Indoor Arena
Bateman Road
Barrington Hills, IL

\$75 per day per participant
\$20 per day to audit
Kids under 12 free
Pony Club students are free on Sunday

*Registrations are due by **April 20** and will be accepted after that date if space permits.
Mail registration and check (made out to Scott Wehrmann) to:
Kristina Anderson, 515 Pond Gate Drive, Barrington Hills, IL 60010.
For inquiries call Kristina Anderson at 847.454.6824 or Gail Baldwin at 847.277.1228.*

Please bring your own folding chair – auditors and riders will be allowed to sit in the arena during the sessions, and the Riding Center has no seating available.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone numbers(s): _____

E-mail address: _____

Date(s) you would like to attend clinic (circle any or all):

Friday, May 4

Saturday, May 5

Sunday, May 6

Are there any times on these dates that you strongly prefer to have your session with Scott? If yes, list here: _____

Note: Your personal session with Scott will last about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Each day will begin with a general introduction to foundation horsemanship and techniques at 9 a.m. (Friday time TBA), which we strongly encourage everyone to attend. Before and after your session with Scott, you may work with your horse in the indoor arena or outside. Scott will help as needed as you work with your horse and will do a wrap-up session for everyone at the end of each day, at which time he will assist you with any problems or concerns you may have.

Name of horse/pony: _____

Age of horse/pony: _____ Gender: _____

Breed: _____ Height: _____

Temperament/personality: _____

Type of riding or other activities you currently do with this horse/pony: _____

Any issues or concerns you would like to work on: _____

Note: Most of the sessions will be in hand. Please note above if you want to do under saddle work and what you would like to work on, and Scott will try to accommodate you if possible. Please bring a rope halter or “natural horsemanship” halter if you have one. We will have some rope halters and lead ropes available at the clinic if you do not have one.

Is there anyone with whom you would like to be grouped for your 2 -3 person session? If so, please give us his/her name: _____

Will you be trailering in and parking your trailer at the Riding Center for the day? _____

Will you be using a stall at the Riding Center? _____

Regarding stabling: (1) You must muck your own stall upon departure. We will have to collect a fee for the Park District if you do not do so. (2) Overnight stabling is not available except by special arrangement. Please contact Gail or Kristina ASAP if you require overnight stabling, but the Park District does not guarantee that overnight stabling will be permitted.

If the participant is a minor, we need parental consent for him/her to participate.

Name of child: _____ Age: _____

Name of parent/signature: _____

IMPORTANT NOTE TO ALL ATTENDEES: The Barrington Countryside Park District requires all participants to execute a liability waiver. You will be required to sign this waiver before you can participate in the Clinic. You will also need to sign a waiver for the Riding Club. We will have copies available for you to sign when you check in, or we can email them to you ahead of time if you like.