

News:

We have **five horses coming for the month of April** for development and then three more coming for the **four day clinic on April 1-4**. Auditors are welcome for this clinic, we did have a few last year. This year we are also offering an **Auditors Workshop on April 17th** where you can come observe the training progress, ask questions, and learn foundational principles important to every horse's performance. Erica my apprentice will be working with me again this year.

People have begun to sign up for the summer Camps. So sign up now before we are full. We are having a new type of camp this year for my alumni students. We are calling it **"BOOT CAMP"**. It will be held at Calamus Outfitters June 20-24. It is for the hard core student who really wants to work some long hard hours in order to move to the next level in their horsemanship skills. There are certain requirements of what you can already do with your horse so that we don't have a huge gap of skill levels with the riders attending. So call Sherry to discuss those prerequisites if you are interested. If you do not meet the requirements not to worry, **there is a camp for everyone**.

I have a gal from Omaha desperately wanting to come to camp either May or June, but doesn't have a trailer. If you have been contemplating attending a camp this year, here is a person to help share travel expenses with you. Let me know if anyone wants to help out and join us at camp this summer? Thanks, Sherry

Trail Ride to support and fund raise for St Jude Children's Hospital. May 1st at Calamus Outfitters, Burwell, NE

\$20 for each rider on top of sponsorship monies. This will include a trail boss and lunch for the day and water available for the horses with plenty of parking. We will have a ride that starts at 9:00 a.m. and another at 1:30 p.m. Registration will start at 8:00 a.m. and the ride should end around 5:00 p.m. Please commit to helping St. Jude on or before April 25th so that we have a count for lunch. We are limiting the number of riders on this first fundraiser for St. Jude so it will be on a first come first serve basis.

Contact Nila at 308.201.0322 nila_christensen@hotmail.com

4-H clinic in Holyoke CO June 5th. If you are a 4-H leader and are interested in hosting a clinic, Sherry gives a nice reduced rate for 4-H groups. Call now for details. 308-346-5663.

Career Opportunity: Erica will be here again in April. This is her third year with me. She started as my apprentice and she paid me to teach her, now I pay her to help me with horses. Our [Apprentice Program](#) is a great opportunity for anyone serious about learning to work with horses.

FEATURE ARTICLE "Is There A Perfect Horse?"

Last spring I wrote an article on "Wise Horse Buying" in response to questions I was getting from people. Now that it is spring again people are beginning to ask the same questions. Plus I have been getting a whole lot of calls from people who would like to sell their horse for one reason or another. Then I have people who recently bought a horse, and want me to evaluate whether it is

the right horse for them or not. Some of them are having buyers remorse. As I was pondering the individual stories that people were sharing with me I began to wonder **“Is There a Perfect Horse?”** Can we really expect to find **“Mr. Perfect”**?.....

There are some horse people who are constantly swapping their current horse in for something “better”. When my husband and I first got married he traded his trucks in what seemed like every year. I used to tease him that I was glad he didn’t trade women in as often as he traded trucks. Thankfully he has finally settled on one truck and he babies that thing like it was the last truck on earth. I think there may be some men out there who are glad their wives don’t trade in husbands as often as they trade their horses. As in husbands, all horses have their quirks and they don’t do everything exactly the way we wish he would.

When you’re looking for a new horse, it is really important to sort out what counts for you. Doing this will help you make some wise choices and it can save you a lot of time, travel and money. But let’s face it, if you must have a buckskin gelding with a white star on his face, who is 14.2 hands, has a pretty head, can win at your event or events (whatever that might be), trail rides so good that you can go to sleep on him, is registered in your favorite breed, has perfectly straight legs with absolutely no confirmation issues, is eight years old, is safe for all beginner riders so you can give all the relatives pony rides, never spooks, stands quietly for all vet, grooming and farrier procedures, has smooth gaits, is so well broke and responsive that he will do whatever you ask even if you don’t ask correctly, he passes the vet check, and doesn’t cost more than \$1000.....you will be looking a long time. And if you find Mr. Perfect, by the time you have owned him for a while you will discover that he (like all horses) has some issues you didn’t know about. Then you will have to decide if you can live with those issues or not. Or perhaps you have enough savvy, or know where you can get the help so that you can work through those issues until they become non-issues.

Sometimes, we don’t end up with the horse we want, but we do get the horse we need. As I said earlier, a lot of people never figure this out and are always convinced that once they discover said issues they can swap this horse for something “better”, **(A horse that will be “perfect”)**. In a way having a horse is a lot like marriage. Heck, I got divorced years ago, and then remarried. After a few months into marriage I discovered that this man had most of the same issues the first one did. Hmmm, maybe, just maybe, could I have been part of the problem? I finally learned that the best partnerships are forged over time. It takes a lot of patience, listening, willingness to change, and sacrificial giving to develop a mutual pleasing relationship. Sure it helps if you pick the right kind of guy, but once you have, you need to hang in there when the honeymoon is over. We must also do this with horses.

I think two years is the basic window, of course there are exceptions to every rule, but if you really want to find out what you and the horse are made of try to give it this much time. Once you’ve owned a horse for two years, you should know what he is and whether he’s the right sort of horse for you. If you think that he is, then its time to hang in there and learn how to deal with what comes up. Then learn how to mold those things you find unacceptable and annoying into what is good for both of you. This may include you doing some changing along with the horse. Sometimes we need to focus on what is important, and let go of the idea that every single thing must be exactly perfect. I have found that when you do this, that little imperfect thing sort of just fades away when you quit focusing on it.

So what is the perfect horse? Well to me they are already perfect at least when we humans are NOT involved. They are exactly what they were created to be. However, when a human gets in the picture with the horse, to me the perfect horse is a horse who does what I need him to do no matter what color, breed, age, height, etc. he is.

So can you find a perfect horse? Yes, you bet, you can find the perfect horse. I have a whole pen of perfect horses. Not because they don’t have any flaws. They are perfect to me because they

consistently and reliably do the things I need them to do when they understand exactly what it is I want them to do and I have motivated them in a way that is meaningful to them. Not that my horses don't make any mistakes or I don't have to work through any issues once in a while with them, after all horses are horses, and stuff happens. But I do know that when I come through for them they will come through for me, and that in my mind is perfect.

Student Testimony

Dear Sherry,

I have to dictate this because I don't have any fingers! Actually, I don't even use words, I had to send this by telepathy, since I'm a right-brained introvert.

Thank you for training my human yesterday. I have been so confused and frightened most of the time because I don't know what she wants me to do! I feel so much more secure and safe when I get clear boundaries and directions. I was glad to see that it's not so scary to go inside the dark tunnel on wheels. I'm not so afraid of the carrot stick anymore, either. You and Erica really helped a lot! I still don't like the human that comes here with the needle and the stuff he puts in my mouth, and the other one that comes here with the file. I'll work on getting my human to keep me steady when they are here.

Your psychic friend, Jesse

Hi Sherry,

I just wanted to say how wonderful it was to finally meet you in person. You helped me so much with my horse. It really opened my eyes when you talked with me about how the emotional baggage she has with her head/ear shyness and how it could be dangerous to me as a rider. I had never thought of that. I thank you for being so honest with me. I am working with her and will continue to. Thank you again for the heartfelt instruction you gave me. I am a very hands-on learner so I appreciate it that you were willing to show me how to use the carrot stick, my hands, energy and just overall to make sure that Cat was getting it. It was great to see her so much more relaxed by the time we left the clinic compared to the 10 foot in the air nose and head she had when we started. I was so exhausted when I left, but it was a good tired. I felt I had really accomplished something with Cat that I hadn't been able to do before. I saw her true nature in that afternoon and now can see how I need to work with her. Thank you again. Carrie