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Hello folks!

This week was pretty quiet compared to last, but we were all kept pretty busy throughout. There's never a dull moment out here!

The boys got the tables moved into the new dining room on Tuesday and it sure is nice! Our Christmas postcards had come in over the weekend and we set up "shop" at one of the tables and got those postcards drummed out with a quickness! We had over 3500 cards to send out and each one had to be addressed and stamped, which is easy, but tedious and time consuming. For one person it would have taken a LONG time but with the help of the entire crew it was a cinch!

A very special thanks goes to Cheryle and Emilie, our guests for the week, and Stephanie who offered to help. Between the three of them, most of the cards were addressed, stamped and finished by Wednesday!

It was a big week for me because Shayne and Randy let me start riding again on Wednesday! Shayne had us each taking turns on each end of the arena doing circles—first we started at a walk and leg yielded at all the corners, then we did the same at the trot and finally we were to stay on the same circle (no cutting in!) and get a smooth transition to the lope.

When that was good going both ways we would back circles both ways, in a size that we felt was fitting to our particular mount. The key was to really try to get the headset correct—with the jaw rolled under—but even more so, to release *when there was some float in the rein*.

On Thursday we each took turns working on the "teardrop exercise" where a rider heads up the rail, comes out on a circle, then reverses flexion and leg-yields over (making the teardrop shape.) Once the horse has gotten that leg yield over, he's ready to take his correct lead. We then head up the other end of the fence and do the same thing on the other side. Make sense?

Actually that exercise is just a culmination of some very basic moves—moves that Shayne told us he does every day to warm up his horse. And so while some were doing the teardrop, those of us in the middle would practice our circles, riding the horse with our body and plucking one rein (as necessary) to keep the horse on our circle. When that's going good you can practice your soft feels with that energy continuing forward. And when you want to change direction, it's either a half circle exercise or reverse

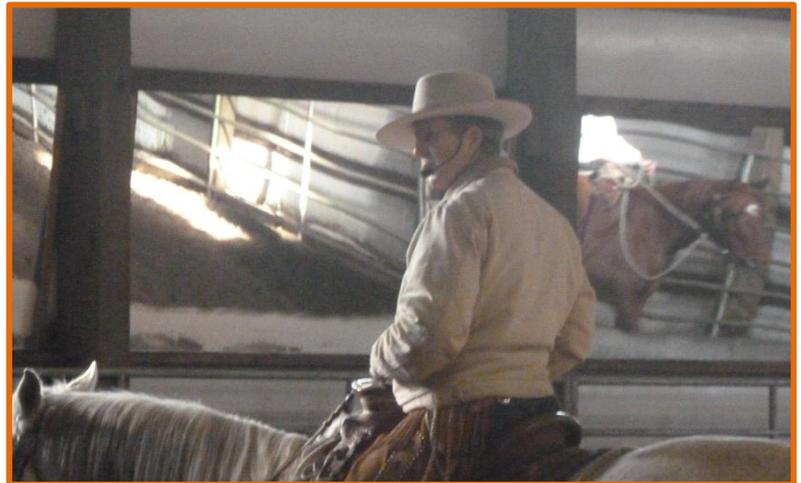
the flexion and leg yield over. This is stuff that some might find “boring” because when you start out, it’s slow work, but it sure gets the horses supple and feeling of you!

We ended Thursday morning by working on changing leads on a straight line. It wasn’t so much about how many lead changes we could get, as much as it was staying accurate and getting the lead we were asking for. All the same though, we were pretty impressed when Randy got 8 lead changes going down the middle on Joey!

It’s snowing again, and looks as though it will be snowing for most of the weekend. Shayne headed off to ski with Vanessa and CJ for the weekend. Dori headed into town with Sue to do the weekly town run and the rest of us are getting the place ready for next week.

Have a great one, guys and gals!

Des



Cheryle learned a LOT on Abe this week

Nothing gets by Shayne! It’s like he’s got eyes in the back of his head!



Emilie and Stephanie got LOTS of leg yields in this week on their horses

