

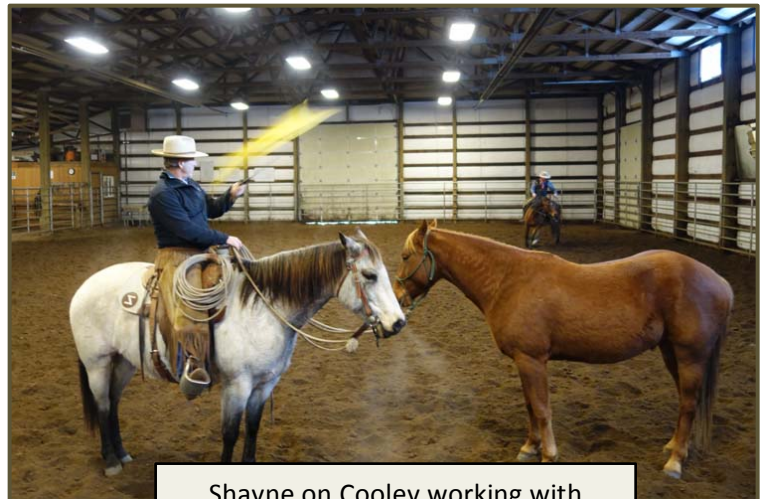


January 23, 2015
Volume 10
Issue 4

Hi folks!

It was another BEAUTIFUL week here at the ranch. I can't believe how warm it is for this time of year! Most days this week were bright and sunny and it looks like they'll be even warmer and just as sunny next week (temps are going to "soar" into the high 40s!)

This week, Shayne took advantage of the fact that we were without guests and started riding Hickory again. After working him a bit on the leadrope from horseback in the first part of the week, he climbed back on him on Thursday and rode him again Friday. His plan is to take all the time needed to finally get Hickory gentle. He's not a of horse who will progress much by sitting around—so when Shayne isn't riding him, Roby will be making up the rides in-between every single day.



Shayne on Cooley working with Hickory

It was a HUGE advantage to be able to get Hickory so gentle while being worked on the leadrope from

Shayne horseback. He really learned to come off of pressure, and hook onto another horse. Because of this, when Shayne started riding him again, he was able to just let Hickory move out and travel with ease, because Hickory was "hooked on" to one of the horses I was on. Hickory didn't have any interest in sucking back in fear, or in stalling out—he was comfortable to walk, trot, lope, switch eyes and turn with the horse beside him.

It's a way of starting colts that seems to be really fitting for them. I don't see why a person would want to do it



Nathan working on the teardrop exercise with Scotch

any other way. It takes a little bit more time, but the rewards for the effort are pretty incredible—the horses seem totally comfortable and their confidence in having a rider on their back grows quickly.

Shayne had Roby start Stephanie's horse Cody this same way, and in just 10 rides he's moving out easy at every gait, gaining on a respectable leg yield, getting his turns down AND he's probably the hardest stopping horse on the ranch right now. Roby has a second client horse to start next week and we'll get him started just the same.

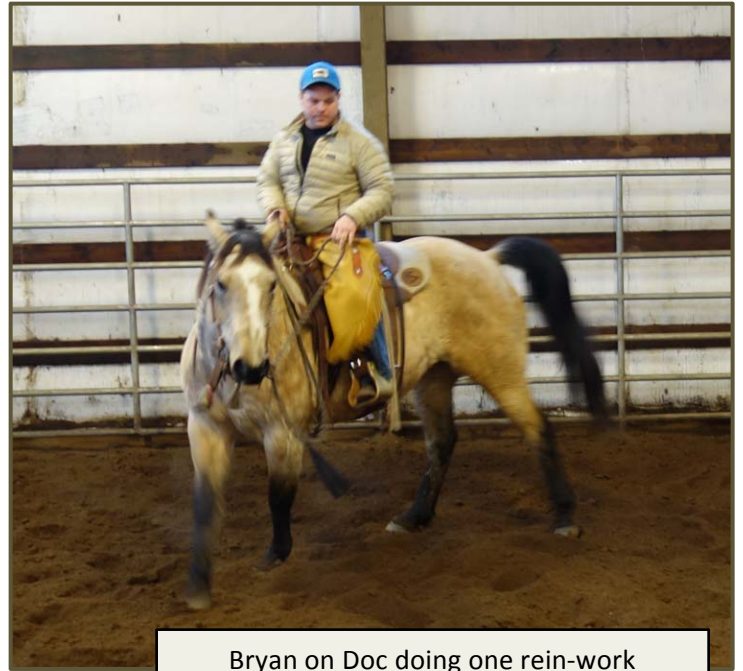
With Stephanie's help in the office, I was able to start riding Pard again, and have taken over riding Yellowhair. Both horses have been here awhile but have never been ridden consistently enough to be quite ready for the guest string. I think both should be ready by late spring if we can keep riding them!

This was Kersten's last week as an intern here. She came a long, long way in two months of riding with us! Kersten was able to ride any horse we gave her, and get them better too! She left with a solid foundation in quality riding, as well as horse doctoring too. Now she's heading back home to save up her pennies to come back next winter. We're going to miss her!

Nathan and Bryan grew by leaps and bounds in their horsemanship this week. Shayne gave them no

mercy and that's how they wanted it. They told him they wanted to get better and so he made them work their butts off! I was impressed by the changes. The difference between their riding from Monday to Friday was night and day. Bryan was able to just lope out easily from a standstill on his horses. Nathan was loping out and really developing a rhythm in his body to maintain great life in his horses. Both of them did maybe a hundred one-rein stops from the trot and the lope this week, which helped them to refine their body position horseback.

Nathan and Bryan were smart enough to know that they weren't going to get their horses any better with kind words and



Bryan on Doc doing one rein-work



Roby is riding Cody and working on reaching a foot inside the circle

rainbows. Shayne told them bluntly—you aren't fixing those horses, you're making them worse, do this or that to get them better. Rather than get their feelings hurt, they bore down and started putting in 110% into each exercise—be it one-rein stops, reaching a foot in a forward circle or reaching it going backwards. They were honest when they didn't get a change and didn't spent too much time celebrating when they did get one—they just went right back to business. They developed a whole new mindset when it came to watching and listening—they became focused and distractions no longer took their attention away from their horses.

That's the way I saw it anyway ;) I think the week was exactly what the doctor ordered for all of us.

Till next time,

Des

And here's Charlotte and Sophie, warming up with the lodge slippers outside! They are the sweetest 😊

