



January 31, 2015
Volume 10
Issue 5

Hi folks!

I know I say it often, but this was yet another great week at the ranch. We had four guests total—2 repeats and 2 new. Between Shayne, Roby and I, we took turns teaching each group. Jan and Sandy were beginner riders who were thinking they might want to buy a couple horses for their farm. They came for winter horsemanship to get a crash course in proper riding and horse care.

Sandy had never ridden a horse beyond a walk and she was tickled when she had Roanie trotting out with her on Tuesday afternoon. At one point she let out a squeel of delight and a hollar of “Yeeshawwww!” when she jumped Roanie out to a lope unintentionally. We watched for a half second in a mixture of amusement and trepidation as she came back down to a trot and then to a stop. Shayne said, “Sandy, I don’t think you’re quite there yet, but we’re glad you tried!” Roanie took the best of care of course!



Jan on Cheech. His posture really got good this week!



Brooke and Cheryle have both been here before and are both experienced riders. Shayne challenged them this week to really get their horses soft and worked with them to get a good reaching step in a circle whenever they asked.

We also did a lot of trotting to

Stephanie, Roby and Nathan in a row, working on short serpentines and reaching feet

Cheryle on Amigo

weightlessness, using a rein when necessary, but working to do it ultimately with our seat and legs. When you go from using reins to *not* using them, you had better be sure that you had your legs working for you and your horse moving off of them pretty good when you HAD reins!

Happily, we can all confidently say this week that all of our horses got better. It's amazing how the more you learn, the

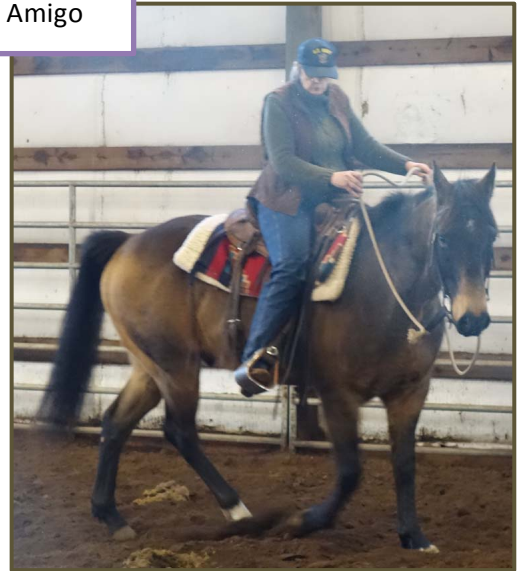
more you feel—and something in a horse that might have felt perfectly fine 6 months ago is something you

realize you need to fix 6 months later. This reaching feet and keeping the horses off the forehead after the reach is something that we've found many of our horses need touched up on. And it's making a huge difference in their flexions and especially in their stopping power. The horses don't just *look* light, and they don't just give a soft feel from their poll—it feels like the soft feel is coming from the *feet*—which is how it should be!

This is especially neat to see in the few colts we've got going right now. With Shayne's horse Hickory and Stephanie's horse Cody, it's interesting to see how good these horses can be from the very start, because they are being ridden the same way we're riding our other horses but they haven't learned it any other way so there's no braces to work through. The gains seem to come daily. Hickory is now confident on his own, and Shayne and Roby

are turning him around slow and fast, trotting him with ease, stopping him very nicely and loping him out without trouble. Roby rides him in the morning for about an hour, then he puts him in a stall where Hickory closes his eyes and dozes for a few hours until Shayne gives him his afternoon ride.

Stephanie has been able to make it out to ride a few afternoons a week and has been getting each horse better. She had Lucy doing sliding stops on Monday and on Wednesday she was able to get one of our colts, Tiny, moving out



really nicely at the trot with proper flexion in each circle.

JJ is still working her magic in the kitchen. We've been trying out several new entrees and a lot of new desserts as well. We've found some real gems so far! The gourmet nut tart JJ made Wednesday (with a melt in your mouth butter crust) tastes like heaven! And she's figured out a way to make her famous cinnamon rolls even better. If you guys haven't had the opportunity to try these yet, put them down as a request for your next visit! They literally melt in your mouth—YUMMY. Voted best ever by Shayne, the staff and all of our guests.

That's all the news that's fit to print this week!

GO SEAHAWKS!!!

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