**AHAA WA BRANCH**

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**Renew your membership now!**

**NEWSLETTER**

**March 2017**

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**AHAA WA COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2017**

**(2017 Positions TBA)**

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**Please do not hesitate to contact a Committee Member for all issues regarding the AHAA WA Branch.**

**ADVERTISING RATES**

**\*AHAA MEMBERS CAN ADVERTISE REGISTERED AHAA HORSES FREE IN THE NEWSLETTER\***

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**\*\* WA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW\*\***

**Due to lack of interest in both the State Championship Show AND the AHAA WA Committee,**

**THERE WILL BE NO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FOR 2017**

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The level of interest in the WA Branch has been falling away since the completion of our 2016 National Show. We really need YOUR help to make this association a supportive, informative and flourishing community which provides interesting events and news for its members.

If you have as little as a couple of hours a month to spare, and would like to contribute in any way to the AHAA WA Branch, please contact one of the Committee Members as listed at the front of this newsletter.

**WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP!**

Well done to Blue Blood Andalusians whose Purebred stallion, Blue Blood Brio, won Supreme of Supremes at Pinjarra Breed Show on 19th Feb 2017…Congratulations!

**BELOW: Blue Blood Brio - L. Schofield/S.Wiscombe** (Pic courtesy of S.Wiscombe)



**Congratulations to Leah Bayfield and her mare Torridon Rufina on winning SUPREME CHAMPION PARTBRED at the Pinjarra Breed show on 19th Feb, 2017**

**BELOW: Simanda Park Shar – Emile Turner** (Pic courtesy of E.Turner)



**Champion Partbred Gelding at Pinjarra Breed Show 19th Feb 2017.**

**SEND YOUR SHOW RESULTS AND PICTURES TO THE EDITOR!**

**becdesmond1@gmail.com**

**BELOW: Simanda Park Shibarna - Emilie Turner (Pic courtesy of E.Turner)**



Rani and her owner and rider, Emilie recently competed at Perth Pony Club Dressage Day and Transitions Dressage Day where she placed 3rd in the Novice test. Well Done!!!

If you attended a clinic or show recently with your AHAA registered horse, let us know how you went! Send your pictures and news to Newsletter Editor, Rebecca Desmond.

**becdesmond1@gmail.com**

**VALE**

S H O G U N



**20th February 1999 – 15th March 2017**

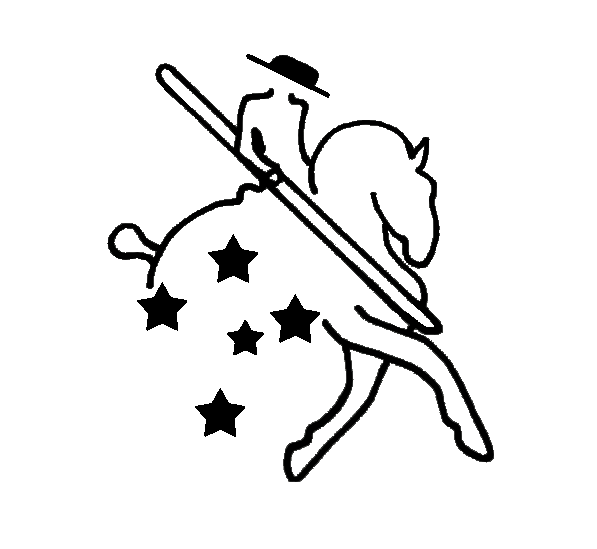
**Charismo x Godita**

*Long-time member and supporter of the Andalusian breed, Sue Wiscombe, recently lost her first Andalusian, Shogun.*

*Sue bought Shogun as a weanling from El Talentos Andalusians. After many years she accomplished so much with this challenging little horse, who kept Sue on her toes, but rewarded her with so much joy.*

*Together, they did many shows and displays, bringing happiness to people and introducing them to the Andalusian breed.*

*He will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with Sue and her family.*

** The Forgotten Shoulders**

Excerpt taken from **workingeqcoach.com** with permission

 The hindquarters seem to be the main focus of most dressage training programmes. There is good reason for this of course – being that only 35 – 40% of a horse’s weight is naturally carried by the hindquarters, yet we want to always increase this percentage as it relates to the horse’s forehand. So it would seem logical to focus on strengthening this part of the horse in order for it to take more weight on our (sometimes never ending) journey towards collection.

 And then there’s the back. Let’s not forget about the all-important ‘movement muscles’. These also are targeted for strengthening and suppling in order to support the unnatural weight of a rider. But what about the forgotten shoulders?

 As the forehand takes roughly 60 – 65% of the weight of the horse, it is in most instances the naturally strongest part of the animal. It eludes our attention as a general rule because of this well known fact. And of course, because our focus as riders is to create more weight bearing and propulsive capacity from the hindquarters, we tend to skip past specific forehand attention.

Does the forehand need strengthening? In many cases, the truth is, no, not really. It is already a naturally strong part of the horse, especially the shoulders. In a lot of cases, it is the neck, and in particular the connection between the neck/back/shoulders that needs help (a discussion for another time).

 But what about the shoulders themselves?

In my opinion, what the shoulders need from us, is to develop a greater range of motion, suppleness and freedom, which can be hard to attain due to the weight distribution of the horse.

 How do we achieve this? Keep reading to find out how some of my favourite exercises may help you unlock the truly profound effect that free and supple shoulders can have on your horse.

**Counter Canter on a Circle with Inside Bend**

This exercise is such an amazing way to achieve maximum reach and stretch from the shoulders, but your horse should be confident in counter canter first.



**HOW**

* You can either start in true canter on a figure eight pattern, or if you like, you can simply pick up counter canter on a straight line and then begin a circle with greater bend to the inside.
* It is MOST IMPORTANT if you start in true canter on the figure of eight, that you have no bend to the inside, or even ask a little counter bend.
* Once you have done your circle in true canter, and as you approach the middle of the arena to change to counter canter, be mindful to keep your inside leg  WELL BACK whilst increasing the bend to the inside, by lifting the inside hand.
* Since you are moving on the circle you need to keep directing the horse around the line of the circle by using an opening hand to the inside. Don’t forget to keep bending whilst opening your hand.
* Make sure you don’t block the horse’s back (it will move you A LOT) but make sure to clearly have more weight on the inside. Think of sitting down and ‘through’ your saddle into your inside heel (which is back and obviously on the inside). This helps a lot.
* Once you come back to the centre of the arena you can lessen the bend and even ask a little true bend… and your back to normal!

**The Spanish Walk**

 Now comes the fun part!

I know the Spanish Walk comes towards the end of your horse’s dressage education in a perfect world. BUT… just like using piaffe in a younger horse to strengthen the back, so too can you use the Spanish Walk earlier in your horse’s education to free up the shoulders.

The horse lifts and extends his leg to the height of his chest or higher, which helps to develop and increase the range of motion and the freedom of the whole forehand.

**HOW**

* Start in hand with a dressage whip. I like to use a bridle with reins attached but you can use a cavesson or serreta or halter.
* Stand at your horse’s shoulder, facing diagonally towards his head (in other words a bit forwards but a bit towards your horse). You can choose to hold the reins in the hand closest to the horse, or one rein in each hand, it’s up to you. Your whip should be in the hand furthest from the horse.
* Tap the horse in a repeated action just on the upper part of the knee. Keep tapping, and increase the intensity of the taps quite rapidly until your horse moves his leg in any way.
* At the first sign of any leg movement, stop tapping and lower the whip. You can use your voice to reward and a scratch on the base of the neck, but please, no food.
* REPEAT.
* In a very short period of time, you horse will start to learn to move his leg in some way when you tap it with the whip. Now, you need to start to ‘shape’ this movement of his leg.
* Instead of rewarding for every movement, start to wait until the leg is clearly lifting, and more preferably, lifting with a forward tendency. Your horse will realise he has to do more in order to get the reward.
* Keep ‘shaping’ the movement of the leg until it is high and forward. Now do the same thing for the other leg
* Once the horse is lifting each leg high and forward with very little tapping, your first step is complete.

*At this stage, you can start to change the position of your whip a bit, as well as use your reins as part of the aid.*

* Keep your ‘outside’ hand on the outside of the horse on the top of his shoulder. As you tap the whip, use it a little higher on the leg so that the whip is not only touching the leg NEAR the knee but also part of the shoulder. Your whip hand also has the inside rein, which you lift up a bit to encourage a slight bend to the inside which helps balance the horse to the opposite shoulder.
* Once your horse is understanding this slightly less clear whip aid, it is time to ride.



From now on, when you ride, you must be careful where you hold your whip. If your horse is a smarty pants, simply holding it on the shoulder may induce him to lift his leg. So be warned!

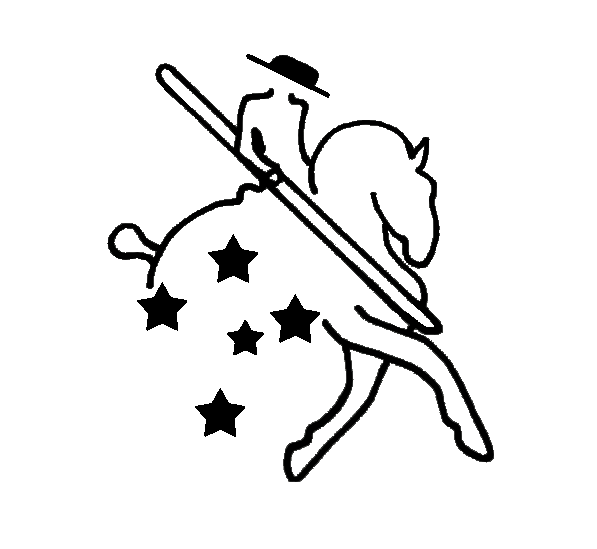
* Halt on the fence. For now, always use the fence on the outside. Your whip will be in your inside hand.
* Start by sitting a bit to the outside.
* Do little repeated vibrating lifting actions with your inside hand whilst using your whip on the shoulder. Really, by this stage, just having your whip on the shoulder whilst you a doing lifting actions with your inside hand should induce the leg to lift and extend. If it doesn’t, you need to go back to the ground, to make the horse’s understanding clearer.
* Once the horse is easily and enthusiastically lifting his inside leg with the slightest whip action, combined with lessening vibrating and lifting of your inside hand (in other words, refining the aid), start asking him to walk a couple of steps forward after every lift. Make this a habit.
* You will find that as you do these repeated transitions between lifting his leg and walking forward, he will start to offer them together, doing one lift, and one step forward, then lifting again. This is called the Jambette.
* Don’t spend too long in this stage, as it can lead to uneven lifting of one leg in the Spanish Walk.
* Once the horse is doing a few steps on each leg, you can start asking the horse to lift his outside leg straight after he has lifted his inside leg.
* As he gets used to this, encourage him to take steps forward…one step forward, lift a leg, another step forward,  lift the other leg. Get him into that routine...swapping legs after every forward step.
* After this, you will find your horse will offer you alternate lifting of his legs whilst stepping forward at the same time. Obviously, these attempts should be rewarded vigorously, whilst normal forward steps with alternate lifting are no longer rewarded.



Now you have to beginning of a proper, academic Spanish Walk. Practise makes perfect... Some horses are naturally good at this and really enjoy it, so learn very quickly (in two days). Others can take weeks. Be clear in your aids and rewards; make the horse continuously do more in order to gain the reward. This is how the Spanish Walk will become not only a great exercise for the shoulders, but a brilliant and expressive movement which makes the horse proud and happy.

Have fun with these exercises. Use them as part of a well-rounded training programme for your horse which includes targeted exercises for other parts of his body to create a balanced, supple and strong riding horse.

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***workingeqcoach.com***