



Observe-Remember Compare

By Tim Hayes

Years ago I participated in a 6-day clinic given by Ray Hunt, one of the world's master horsemen. Ray was the first disciple of Tom Dorrance considered by most to be the father of Natural Horsemanship in the twentieth century. The Clinic was held in Canada and situated in northern British Columbia on a one million acre cattle ranch. It was spectacular.

I learned many things at that clinic about how to get good with horses but the one that has helped me the most was something Ray said that has since become legend: "Observe, Remember, Compare". Simply put it means every time you're interacting with your horse observe how he or she behaves in each and every situation no matter how insignificant it may seem.

Whatever you observe your horse doing when you're interacting with him; remember it. Remember it until the next time you're together and interacting again. Then compare how he behaved the first time to how he's behaving now. It will reveal valuable information. Most importantly you'll learn if the two of you are getting better, getting worse or staying the same. If a change is required and you are already natural with horses you'll know the first change you need to make is in yourself in order to create a change in your horse.

If you're leading your horse on the ground is he walking at your shoulder, behind you or in front of you? When you're riding and ask him to stop does he come to a dead stop at your first request or does he take a few extra steps before completely stopping? If he starts to buck, what did you observe him do right before he started bucking?

The more observant you become the better you'll be with horses. 99% of the time everything a horse does that would be helpful to know about before it happens is preceded by his exhibiting some type of physical signal or noticeable behavior. It's called: "knowing what happens before what happens happens". Horses are black belts at this because their survival depends on always being one step ahead of predators. Getting good at observing and paying attention like horses do will also help your self-preservation. You may already know you need to pay attention to your horse's ears when he pins them back or that before he bucks he always drops his head. That's good but there are hundreds more.

Learning, understanding and practicing to be this aware of your horse is not only helpful in improving your riding and horsemanship it is paramount in staying safe and protecting yourself and your horse from getting hurt. Knowing and being aware of something as simple as the fact that your horse bends his head and neck around easier to the right than to the left may one day save your life on a trail ride. If for some reason your horse becomes so fearful that he decides he must take off and run as fast as he can then knowing that you have a better chance of shutting him down



Tim and Ray Hunt at the Grand Ranch Clinic, 1999.



Tim riding at Gang Rach Clinic, British Columbia, Canada. Photos courtesy T Hayes

by bending his head to the right as opposed to the left becomes something you'll be grateful you remembered.

To observe, remember and compare is also an excellent way to learn what horses are capable of and how good some of them can be. Riding is the only sport or human endeavor where the "equipment" or "instrument" as well as the person, must learn to achieve certain levels of expertise. I can use Tiger Wood's Golf Clubs but I won't play like Tiger Woods; I'll still play like me. I can play on Billy Joel's piano but I won't play like Billy Joel; I'll still play like me.

If however I am able to observe what it physically feels like to ride a Grand Prix Dressage horse or a Champion Reining horse then I will forever know what is possible to achieve and how far I still have to progress with my horse or my journey with horses. It's one thing to watch a rider on an accomplished horse execute a Pi-affe or a Slide Stop. It's quite another to have a horse who already knows how to do it show you what it should feel like. One of my teachers Pat Parelli likes to say: "Humans teach horses - Horses teach humans".

Of all the human disciplines horses are asked to participate in whether it's Dressage, Jumping, Polo or Cutting; Roping horses are the ultimate when it comes to partnering with a human to accomplish a goal. Not only does the horse come to a dead stop the second he feels the rider's rope going around the cow's neck but he helps the rider by preventing the cow from standing up and getting away. He does this by slowly backing up and pulling the cow toward himself until the rider can run over and tie the cow's feet. The horse knows to do this after the rider has already jumped off. For me this is the ultimate example of a horse/human partnership.

Many years ago in Idaho I had the opportunity of riding my friend's horse Spot. Spot it turned out had just been named the 1993 Idaho State Champion Roping Horse. I had no idea what that meant. I remember galloping across a large arena, becoming anxious at going so fast and thinking I should stop. I remember

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Lear's Princess was second and Octave, the Coaching Club American Oaks winner, was third. Belmont Stakes winner Rags to Riches was scratched. Also on Aug. 18, Dee Zee Stable's Latitude Forty posted a 1-1/4 victory over Factual Contender in the 1-1/8 mile Yaddo Handicap for fillies and mares on the turf.

Miss Shop went from last to first to win the Personal Ensign by 3 lengths Aug. 24 and become a millionaire. The 4-year-old was trained by H. Allen Jerkens and ridden by Javier Catsellano, who was confident that she could make the 1-1/4 mile distance.

Tragedy and triumph attended the 7-furlong Ballerina for fillies and mares Aug. 26. The pace setter, Indian Flare, broke down with a fractured pelvis. The veterinarian said she died of cardiovascular shock. The winner was California-based Maryfield, whose owner, Mark Gorman, called her "a gift from the horse gods."

As the Saratoga meet wound down, Lawyer Ron, ridden by John Velazquez and trained by Todd Pletcher, showed that his July 28 Whitney victory was no fluke. Lawyer Ron won the 1-1/8 mile Woodward by 8-1/4 lengths on Sept. 1. Shaun Bridgmohan replaced Edgar Prado, who injured his ankle in a spill earlier that day, on Midnite Lute and won the 7-furlong Forego Handicap. Watch for some of the Saratoga winners in the fall races.

- ODDS AND ENDS -

F. Bruce "Chip" Miller became the 8th jockey in history to win 200 American steeplechase races when he won the Michael G. Walsh Aug. 23 aboard Planets Aligned. Arcadia Stable's Footlights, trained by Roger Horgan and ridden by Xavier Aizpuri, won the New York Turf Writers Steeplechase at 2 miles and 3 furlongs by 11-1/2 lengths on Aug. 30. Like Rags to Riches in the Belmont, the 7-year-old mare carried less weight than the colts and geldings. Steeplechase races are still seen at Saratoga, though less frequently than in the past. They are not popular with bettors.

Correction, please: The photo caption in August Track Talk was incorrect. Curlin did not win the Jim Dandy; the winner was Street Sense, ridden by Calvin Borel.

Racing returned to Belmont Park Sept. 7. Among the upcoming big events are the Jockey Club Gold Cup Sept. 30 and New York Showcase Day Oct. 20. For information call 516-488-6000.

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Games (WEG) in Jerez, Spain where Wylde also won the Individual Show Jumping Bronze medal. Fein Cera is also in the process of a comeback after having taking time off to have an embryo inserted into a surrogate mare.

TRACEY WEINBERG WINS CALVIN KLEIN SHOW JUMPING DERBY

Tracey Weinberg of Lovettsville, VA, rode to victory in the \$25,000 Calvin Klein Show Jumping Derby at the Hampton Classic Horse Show on Sunday morning, riding Linda Z, owned by Weinberg and the Weinberg Brokerage Group.

Andrew Welles of Long Lake, Minnesota, finished second on Cadanio Z, owned by Peter Welles. Third went to Canadian rider Miranda Fischer riding Hot Wheels.

In the Calvin Klein Show Jumping Derby no one managed to go clear in round one, so the jump-off consisted of three riders who had tied for the lead with four faults. Weinberg and Linda Z were the first to go. They went clean, but their time of 44.651 seconds was respectable but beatable.

Welles beat the time, but not without dropping a rail, so he ended up with four faults and a jump-off time of 42.575. Fischer, the final rider in the jump-off also managed to beat the clock, but not gravity. She and Hot Wheels also had a rail to finish with four faults in a time of 43.160 seconds.

Weinberg, who is trained by Olympic veteran Joe Fargis, said she was told to ignore the clock and go for the clear round. "Joe told me not to go crazy, just ride for a clean round and of course, Joe is always right!" said Weinberg. "I knew after I came out of the ring that my time was beatable, but the stars were aligned and the others had rails. I'm overwhelmed!"



Peter Wylde aboard Gael Force win the Nicolock Challenge at the Hampton Classic.

Weinberg thought the course was difficult for her 15-hand Holsteiner mare, but learned valuable lessons in the process. "Every time I ride one of his courses, I learn something. Conrad is a genius. He makes you think every step of the way. I knew when I walked the course it was going to be difficult. I didn't have a moment to take a breath other than at the top of the bank."

Several Championships were awarded at the Classic that Sunday: Tracey Weinberg, who won the Amateur Owner Division and Maria Schaub of Holmdel, New Jersey, who took the Junior Jumper Style of Riding Award. Margie Engle of West Palm Beach was awarded the National Open Jumper Championship and Katherine Newman of Upperville, Massachusetts, won the Junior Jumper High Score Award. Jessica Springsteen of Colts Neck, New Jersey, captured the Best Junior Rider award. Addison Phillips of NYC, took home the Equitation Championship and the Best Style of Riding Award on a Hunter went to Scott Stewart of Wellington, Florida.

Visitors, locals, volunteers and competitors said that this year's Hampton Classic horse show was one of the best and well-managed annual event. (Last year's show was soaked with rain storms and mud.) But this year, all went well with competitors and visitors, and Shannette Barth Cohen was praised for her fortitude and direction of this, one of the biggest and most popular horse show event in the country.

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Time Effects collected ribbons at Winners Circle in Baby Green-sand low Hunters. Rachel also placed 5th in the Low Eq division at her 1st time at the Hampton Classic. Thanks to Dehri Levine for helping Rachel at the Classic. Sarah Halpin on Danielle Franchi's Miz Belle were Champion in the Mini Short Stirrup at the Glen Head Horse Show. Sarah had only jumped the pony twice before. Thank you to the Franchi's for loaning Sarah this wonderful pony and also to Dehri for her help at the show.

The next Dressage Show will be held on Oct 13th & 14th. For information or to be put on our mailing list call the farm at 631-435-1880. Please check our website for future events www.knoll-farm.com. - Karin E. Schackne

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the moment I thought I wanted to stop; Spot stopped. Stopped dead. Nailed it. Dead on a dime. I've never forgotten how it felt.

From that day until now I know how I would like my horses to stop. My horse Austin and I don't stop like Spot yet but we have a goal. I have yet to achieve that same experience but I know what's possible and what it can feel like and that in itself makes me better with horses. Observe, Remember and Compare. It will make you better with horses too. ©Tim Hayes2007

For Clinics, Group Classes or Private Sessions
Contact Tim at: 631-329-5840 or go to: www.hayesforhorses.com