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## **2012 Symposium Success in the Pacific Northwest “Self Carriage and Lightness in Rider and Horse”**

When the Centered Riding Board of Trustees put out a call to hold the 2012 Symposium “out west”, immediate generous support by our event sponsors made it possible to forge ahead and create the 18th Annual Centered Riding Educational Symposium to be held at Rhodes River Ranch. Jean Rhodes ensured that we had world renowned keynote speakers, Eitan and Debbie Beth-Halachmy, by donating their deposit. Jean also improved the budget with concessions off the Rhodes River Ranch arena rate. Alaska Airlines, Delta Airlines and The Medallion Hotel offered substantial discounts to our attendees. The Restaurant at Rhodes River Ranch dismissed the meeting space and audio visual charges. Cam Essick designed the typography used for the handouts cover and favors. Rob McBride personally delivered the fleece blankets his company, Mprint Marketing Unlimited, custom embroidered. Kasey Monty supplied the keynote airport shuttle. Nikki Behner provided the keynote speakers’ flights and also sponsored the Warm Beach Vaulters. CDR Farm made hospitality baskets available for all our presenters and provided additional keynote meals.

While registrations were alarmingly last minute, the good natures of Bonnie Rose, Executive Chef of The Restaurant at Rhodes River Ranch, Kinny Alvers, with the band “Barbwire”, Patti Skipton, plus the Warm Beach Vaulters team, and Debbie, in the Centered Riding office, allowed us to put the final details into place during that last week of preparation.

At last the event was upon us and the educational value was extremely high. Eitan’s keynote presentation, demonstration and teaching proved him to be a classicist. We all enjoyed his constructive style of instruction and lighthearted demeanor.

Debbie Beth-Halachmy was straightforward and very informative with her business advice. And Centered Riding abounded - ten different Centered Riding Instructors who featured their use of Centered Riding Techniques within distinct disciplines and applications. Kandis Horton explained step-by-step considerations for teaching a student while on the lunge line. Elsa Sinclair took us on a memorable journey of developing a “no-strings” connection with her mustang.

Connie Lloyd facilitated internal explorations of individual body use. Dr. Suzan Seeley, DVM demonstrated simple transformational equine bodywork movements.

Sally Haney, Karen Irland and Sam Morrison stepped in to teach Elaine Steele with a progression of Centered Riding Techniques. Barb Apple demonstrated the dance of horse and rider moving together with grace and rhythm.

Nancy Kittleson enlightened us on companionable liberty interactions that build on the horse-human bond. Elaine Meredith Steele shared twenty riding concepts demonstrated through ground exercises. Karen Irland helped us be aware of our true core use - on and off the horse - and showed simple ways to teach it. All in all, the symposium lived up to its educational promise.

As she sponsored gifts for the Education Fund raffle, attendee Rox Rodgers wrote, "I feel strongly about Centered Riding and how my riding and outlook on life has soared!!" Additional prize sponsors were Arlington Hardware, Mister T's Awards, Arlington Co-op Supply, Strotz Country Feed, Sue Leffler, Elaine Meredith Steele, Connie Lloyd and Warm Beach Vaulters. Vendors provided event atmosphere plus more prizes for the Education Fund Raffle. Jean Rhodes displayed her favorite charities and had RRR items for sale. KRH Equestrian Services had a wonderful assortment of children's clothing and racks of Bourne saddles. Tracy Cross sold handmade metal jewelry and leather with bling. B1 to Inspire exhibited beautiful handcrafted cut steel artwork and two of these became the Grand Prizes. Amazingly Sally Haney won them both! The Crown Prize - a "Sons of the Wind Farm" certificate for six lessons over three days of training at one of Vitor Silva's training centers in Massachusetts or Florida, or during clinics hosted at Rhodes River Ranch - was won by Susan Harris.

This year's silent auction was filled with an interesting assortment. Donation items were provided by Bonnie Rose of The Restaurant at Rhodes River Ranch, Melina Knoop, Karen Irland, Deb Moynihan, Emily Wigley, Jennifer Atkins, Susan Strong Kelley, Sherry Wallmark, Kandis Horton, Joe Gershman, Rhodes River Ranch, Angela Mendoza, Riding Couture, Dr. Maci Paden of Clover Valley Vet Services and Suzi Lewis.

All the attendees rallied together to hold the spirit high and turn the numbers for Centered Riding's only annual fundraising event into a success. Volunteers stepped up to make the event an actuality. Heidi Potter chaired the symposium and oversaw the accounts. Katie Hoover collected Education Fund raffle donations. Sally Haney cooked keynote breakfasts. Pat Augustziny and Kristin Thompson helped with setup. Nikki Behner and Elaine Steele manned the registration table. Dale Offermann, Holly Offermann, Ken Collins and Lisa Collins did dressage court staging and were constantly available throughout the event to "go for". Angela Mulberg served as event photographer. Sandra Poppema assisted Kandis Horton with the Silent Auction. Cameron Sinclair helped with the entire post event tear down. And a myriad of amazing people stepped up in the moment to make things run smoothly.

The crew at Rhodes River Ranch ensured that the arena, vendor stalls, and school horses were at their optimum for our event. Executive Chef, Bonnie Rose, and her staff in The Restaurant at Rhodes River Ranch kept us well nourished and satisfied while seamlessly attending to our meeting room and audio visual needs. And Jean Rhodes...without her generous devotion to Centered Riding, this event never would have come to be.

We can't describe the 2012 Symposium without mentioning all the wonderful entertainers that enhanced the event experience. Dale Offermann and his Nokota Horses, Dale Rumens-Partee and McKenzie Teel riding their Cowboy Dressage patterns, Patti Skipton and the spectacular Warm Beach Vaulters team, plus Barb Apple and her horse "Feather", all collaborated to entertain us on Friday evening. A spontaneous burst into song by Elaine Steele and Sally Haney followed a presentation to Jean Rhodes which recognized her major sponsorship of the non-profit Equine Ambassadors. We all appreciated Eitan's informative and candid Saturday evening Keynote presentation, followed by a wonderfully instructive demonstration ride by Eitan and his apprentice, Kasey Monty, which perfectly prepared the audience for the next day's clinic. The haunting slide steel music of Kinny Alvers with his band "Barbwire" opened the Sunday evening finale of the symposium. Cowboy Dressage Schooling Classes and Freestyles were beautifully ridden by clinic participants Nancy Fellows, Carrie Scidmore, Barb Apple, Susan Strong Kelley, Jean Rhodes, and Peggy Brown. The best entertainer was our own President, Carol Wilson, who artfully used her humor and strength of character to keep the symposium light and moving along well. The Symposium theme, "Self Carriage and Lightness in Rider and Horse", was enjoyably conveyed to all while Carol had the reins of this event.

My sincerest thanks to all ~ Elaine Meredith Steele, Symposium Organizer