

10230 Tabeau Road  
Jackson, CA 95642  
(209) 223-4421  
(209) 223-4539 fax



website:  
MiracleMountain.com  
e-mail:  
MMRI@MiracleMountain.com

Experience Horsemanship From the Heart!

## The MMR Newsletter

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## Talk About Timing

One of the most complex elements of horsemanship is learning proper timing. Most other equine skills build on timing, so it is important to make sure you understand this before you can progress with the rest of the equine partnership.

"It is not surprising that this is where many students struggle the most in learning *Horsemanship From the Heart*," explains MMR owner and trainer Julie Carpenter. "Timing develops differently in everyone."

It takes a lot of practice, focus, and the desire to connect on an unspoken level with your horse. It comes with time. But an experienced trainer's helping hand can give people a jump start. Following is some of what Julie has to say on the subject.

### So What is Timing?

Horses have an unspoken language that we humans can learn. It involves a physical request with

a precise beginning and end. First you clearly ask the horse for what you want, then you follow through to support them as you wait for the change. When the horse does what you ask, their reward is a release of physical and emotional pressure. Note that this pressure is usually very, very light, and often imperceptible between experienced horse-human partners. The goal is to do as little as possible to get a correct response.

Most beginners find they just need a little help from an experienced eye to get the idea of the timing their horse needs from them. I can be there to cue them on when to ask for a turn and when to give the release. Eventually, they begin to see it on their own.

Another part of timing is learning to recognize how a horse is feeling about our requests. At first I might point out what a horse is doing that tells me he is OK with a request. I look for a horse who is travelling without tightness, has a soft eye, or is licking and chewing. As each student catches on, I encourage them to find the perfect moment to release or to ask for more. All of this results in an increasing ability to read your horse.

### The Tricky Thing About Timing

Horsemanship is a constantly evolving art; One that even trainers continually work at each day. There is always another layer--another level--to learn or understand better.

As each student-horse partnership progresses, their timing gets better and the bar on their communication is raised. A not-so-perfect execution that was OK at first, is no longer acceptable. A blatant cue I might have used to ask a young horse to change direction becomes a slight shift in my body for my experienced riding horse.

As a result of this progression, I might coach someone differently today than I did in what appears to be the same situation a month ago. Or I might tell two people to handle a similar situation differently depending on each horse.



Julie Carpenter on her Peruvian stallion, Alado.



Marlin and Moon (front) look forward to the next challenge. Moon, a loaner horse from Tracy (back), carried Marlin to 1st place, while Tracy took 5th.

## Trail Trials Provide Fun Challenges!

What could be more fun than a day out on the trail with your horse? A day on the trail with your horse, lots of friends, challenges to accomplish, and then lunch!

That's what twelve riders did on August 9th at Miracle Mountain Ranch. The event paired two riders at a time to complete ten different 'obstacles' on a two-mile trail ride. Before heading out on the trail, riders had to trailer load their horse, then tack up, mount and dismount.

Out on the trail, challenges included a water crossing, walking through mud, over halfpipes and cattle guards, descending a steep hill, and opening and closing a gate. Each 'obstacle' had easy and hard alternatives. Points were given for less than perfect performance.

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The Miracle Mountain Ranch newsletter is produced and distributed quarterly. Its mission is to share MMR news & happenings and to supply continuing knowledge to help everyone improve their equine partnership skills using *Horsemanship From the Heart*.

Please let us know what you think of our content and what else you would like to see. You can contact MMR Newsletter Editor Susan Hartje at ACTSusan@earthlink.net or 209-245-3789 or contact the ranch at MMRI@MiracleMountain.com or 209-223-4421.

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# Trail Trials Snapshots

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**Top:** Stacy (left) and Roxanne, took the long way around to get to one obstacle. But they both performed well. **Roxanne placed 3rd** in the Trail Trial.



**Above:** Jackie and her horse could not be missed on the trail. They make a striking pair, and they earned **2nd Place** in the event!

"Even the highest scoring rider had only 17 points out of a worst possible score of 60," notes event organizer Cathy Warhlick. "And, the volunteer judges had fun, too!"

Trail Trials are designed to be 'Fun Rides' with just enough challenges to keep horse and rider focused on besting their own performance. Feedback was so positive on this event that plans are underway to hold it twice a year and expand it to include both a morning ride and a longer advanced afternoon challenge.

The August 9th event raised \$600 to benefit **Hearts for Horses**, the non-profit arm of Miracle Mountain Ranch. Thanks to everyone who participated!



**Above Right:** Pat and Chico barely notice the squeeze at the boulder challenge and head towards the water obstacles.

**Below:** Two last-minute entrants, Kurt (left) and Rich (Yes, Julie's hubby does ride!), descend from the upper trail to the lower half where they will traverse mud, go over pipes and through the water on their Peruvian mounts. This was Kurt's mare's 4th trail ride ever!



**Above:** 5th Place finisher Tracy on Cruiser. Tracy and his ride companion, Marlin, were having such a relaxed time on the trail that they nearly missed a turn. But they didn't care; They were just here for the fun!



**Above:** Niki (left) on Prima, and 4th Place winner Bobbie, on Duke, smile as they approach the next obstacle on the trail. Having fun while challenging themselves and their horses is what the day was all about.



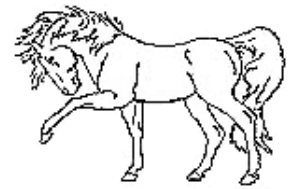
**Below:** Maritza and Sabra work their way down a small incline towards the next obstacle. **Sabra, on Matt, tied for 5th Place.**



**Back at the Bunkhouse:** Above: Bobbie (back) reviews her scores and comments, while Judge Nick relaxes with the group. Right: Riders and judges cool off and discuss the morning-long event over lunch. Far Right: Sabra discusses her score card with Judge Liza. Liza had planned to ride until her horse came up lame that morning. But, she reports she had a great time judging too!



# MMR 2003-2004 Calendar



Date	Event	Cost	Notes**
Oct. 13-31	Three-week Apprenticeship	\$2,100	<b>FULL!</b>
Nov. 19	One-day Clinic	\$100	
Nov. 29- Dec. 1	Three-day Clinic Happy Holidays!	\$375	
<b>2004</b>			
Jan. 7, 28	One-day Clinics	\$100	
Jan. 17-19	Three-day Clinic	\$375	
Feb. 11, 25	One-day Clinics	\$100	
Feb. 14-16	Three-day Clinic	\$375	
March 1-19	Three-week Apprenticeship	\$2,100	<b>FULL!</b>
March 24	One-day Clinic	\$100	
April 1-5	Five-day Clinic	\$625	
April 14	One-day Clinic	\$100	
April 24-27	Harry Whitney Four-day Clinic	\$600	<b>Both Clinics: Individual Slots Full</b>
May 1-3	Harry Whitney Three-day Clinic	\$450	<b>Groups, Audit &amp; Waiting List open**</b>
May 12	One-day Clinic	\$100	
May 14-19	On The Way Ranch Clinic	\$TBA	<b>Hosted by Kim Bolewine in Copperopolis. Contact OnTheWayRanch@caltel.com or 209-785-5075.</b>
May 24-30	Women's Camp	\$775	
June 5	Trail Trials	\$50	<b>(\$65 entry fee after May 15th) Includes Lunch</b>
June 9, 23	One-day Clinics	\$100	
June 11-13	Three-day Clinic	\$375	
June 26-27	Two-day Clinic	\$250	
July 5-7	Three-day Clinic	\$375	
July 11-17	Youth Camp	\$775	
July 21	One-day Clinic	\$100	
July 23-27	Five-day Clinic	\$625	
August 2-20	Three-week Apprenticeship	\$2,100	<b>One spot left!</b>
August 25	One-day Clinic	\$100	
August 28	Trail Trials	\$50	<b>(\$65 entry fee after Aug. 10th) Includes Lunch</b>
Sept. 3-8	On The Way Ranch Clinic	\$TBA	<b>Hosted by Kim Bolewine in Copperopolis. Contact OnTheWayRanch@caltel.com or 209-785-5075.</b>
Sept. 15, 29	One-day Clinics	\$100	
Sept. 19-25	Women's Camp	\$775	
Oct. 11-29	Three-week Apprenticeship	\$2,100	

\*Camps include horse board, a bed in the bunkhouse and all food.

\* Camps begin at 1 pm on the first day and end at 2 pm on the final day.

\*\*\*\*\*

All multi-day Clinics cost \$125/day including horse board. All single-day Clinics are \$100.

All clinics run from 9am - 5pm unless otherwise noted.

\*\*\*\*\*

Deposits are required to hold your space in all clinics & camps except one-day clinics. If you cancel without time to replace you, we ask that you cover your commitment.

\*\*\*\*\*

**\*\*MMR maintains a wait-list on all camps and clinics because we understand things happen.** If we can refill your space, you may transfer your deposit to any other MMR service, or get a refund. If we cannot fill your space, your deposit is non-refundable.



*Julie uses reins on the ground to help Kathleen feel how minute changes in her timing and balance in the saddle feel to her horse.*

## Timing

*Continued from Page 1*

I try to explain my suggestions, so that students don't get confused or frustrated. It is just part of the learning process.

### Timing Takes Time

Every person and horse partnership is different. Both people and their horses learn at their own speeds. It's hard to do this all by yourself--especially with your first horse. I am here to give guidance when people need

it. It is extremely rewarding to me to be able to help people along in this process.

In the end it all comes down to getting back what you put into the relationship. No matter whether you have ten minutes or ten hours a day to spend with your horse, if you spend that time focused on learning together, you will eventually get to where you want to be.

It may feel like taking the time to think about and develop timing takes longer, but when students look back and compare what they could do a year prior, it is absolutely amazing to see the differences. The reward is being

able to ride or play together with your horse in a way most people never thought they could reach.

Timing is the groundwork of safety and understanding. It is the glue that keeps you a team when something new happens. It is what helps you anticipate what your horse is going to want to do. It's what helps your horse stay engaged in your adventures together.

I am here to help nurture this thing called timing. But the biggest part of the success comes from the person staying focused on improving their own abilities in their own private equine ballet.

# My Three-Week Experience

by *Niki Nickerson*

When I was asked to write about the Three-Week Apprenticeship I attended in March, I was delighted, because it is such a great experience! This was my second one, and I had started the program full of apprehension. A few months before, I had tumbled off my young horse and was just getting back in the saddle. Also, I didn't know many of the others and was worried about how it was all going to work out if everyone didn't get along. Of course it all turned out fine, mainly thanks to Julie, and also a fantastic group of women!

The program started with introductions. The way Julie does this works out really well because it forces you to think about why you signed up in the first place and what you are trying to accomplish. For me that was getting back on my horse and enjoying riding again!

Listening to other group members, you start to realize you're not alone with your fears, doubts and goals. Everybody has their own issues. And you better believe that Julie's attention is focused on these throughout the three weeks, as well as other issues you never thought you had.

Julie is a master at figuring out what you and your horse need and where you might be stuck. She can

talk you through it while you work with your horse, so you get the "feel" of it. When you're not working with your horse, you learn by watching Julie guide and teach the others.

It also doesn't matter when your turn comes during the day because one of the amazing things about Julie is her boundless energy and focus!

Julie is truly passionate about horses and learning to communicate better with them. You can be the last person in the round pen, it might be cold and rainy, blazing hot, or late in the day, but Julie is still just as focused as she was at 9 o'clock in the morning. And she keeps it going all three weeks!

Afternoons are usually for riding, either in the covered arena or out on the trails. And Julie made sure that no two days were the same. We had a saddle fitting one morning that was both instructive and funny. We watched training videos and had a lecture on bits and bridles.



**Niki on her Peruvian mare, Prima**

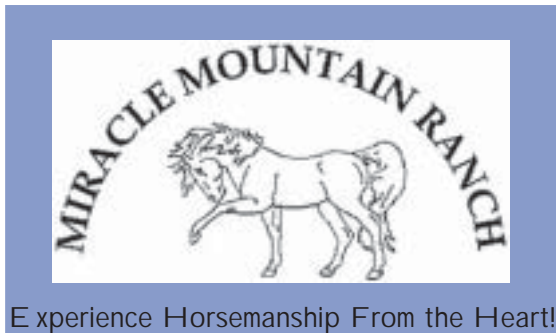
During the clinic, we watched Debbie begin work with her young filly. Another participant, Leslie, was totally new to the kind of horsemanship Julie teaches. We watched Leslie and her horse transform before our very eyes!

Julie also paired us up to work on our skills together. We did groundwork with each other's horses and we got to "teach" each other. What a great experience! It was both very dif-

ficult and terrific fun.

The three weeks go by quickly. There is so much information, so many friendships are formed, and we and our horses learned so much.

These three weeks got me riding again and I am enjoying it immensely, thanks to Julie. I encourage everyone to participate in a Three-week. Maybe I will see you in the next one!



Visit us for more news and information at our website: [MiracleMountain.com](http://MiracleMountain.com)

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[MMRI@MiracleMountain.com](mailto:MMRI@MiracleMountain.com)