

# Horse savvy taught at Rendezvous

By Jill Hayward  
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Star/Journal

"I should have stopped earlier," said Marion Weisskopff as the horse she was riding fussed a little, "I asked way too much for the first time."

Weisskopff was speaking to a large audience during the Back Country Horsemen Rendezvous in Barriere on Saturday, June 3 as she demonstrated how to teach a horse to be a more willing partner at home or on the trails.

Whether handling a demonstration horse or putting her Spanish Andalusian stallion Tribuno II through intricate maneuvers under saddle Weisskopff's message was the same.

"The quicker you give a release the quicker they will learn," she repeated numerous times, "Horses look for the answer until you release, then they have found it."

Starting with a young horse (one quickly shown by Weisskopff who was in charge) she progressed to methods for safe bridling, mounting and more.

Teaching a horse to side-pass with very little effort she once again reiterated, "This horse is looking for the answer

to what I have asked her to do, when I release my leg pressure she has found it."

Having spent a lifetime with horses Weisskopff hails from Germany where her parents operated a riding stable.

"I rode all kinds of horses and all kinds of styles (western, English, dressage, etc.), which gave me an appreciation for all kinds of riding," said the horsewoman who started instructing at age 13.

Moving to Canada in 1984 Weisskopff settled in Princeton where she works and operates her own ranch and horse facility, MW Sport Horses.

"I have been training horses since I was a kid and have been teaching for the last five or six years. I have ranched, guided, horse logged, moved cows and competed in horse shows," said the trainer, "I don't show anymore as I am on the road full-time teaching."

However, Weisskopff says she will take in one show this year when she travels down to the lower mainland to present her Andalusian stallion at a first-time Andalusian Show being held in the Chilliwack area.

Next year this unassuming horsewomen will slow down

from her teaching road trips and concentrate a little more on training horses at home.

"I have had my stallion since he was a yearling, now he is 13 years old and I have had very little time to work with him due to my busy schedule," she said.

Weisskopff's impressive ability to out-think her horses and to truly get into their heads has instilled a close bond between her and her stallion. Working as a team, fully comfortable with each other, they demonstrated a number of movements for the audience, including working at liberty (bridleless), rearing, laying down on command, performing the Spanish walk, and more.

"Very little work" completed by Weisskopff could be a lifetime of work by someone without her knowledge, talent, and horse savvy.

A hit with her audience Weisskopff imparted her message lightly and with humour.

Speaking to the crowd in regards to getting a horse to stop quickly and efficiently she stated, "If you let them stop with their middle finger up, that's not good enough, you have to ask them what you want and let them find the answer."



STAR/JOURNAL photos: Jill Hayward

**(Above) Completely comfortable with each other and working as a team – trainer Marion Weisskopff and her Spanish Andalusian stallion Tribuno II demonstrated what correct training and trust can accomplish to the Back Country Horsemen during Rendezvous in Barriere on June 2, 3 and 4.**

**(Right) Weisskopff worked her stallion at liberty (without a bridle) which included rearing and laying down on command.**

