



Coventry show season is over! We had three amazing shows and the last one was with L Graduate (judge) Robin Birk. Robin will be visiting over the winter for clinics! Now is time to gear up for next year... what are your goals! And, what will you do to achieve them? Mandy is riding Beau above, they have goals and they succeed. Mandy trains Beau 3- 4 times week and they showed First Level 3 for the first time and rocked the show with a 68%...

Calendar of Events
 Pilates at Coventry November 16th 11 am.
 For more information contact Kristin at blythedale@comcast.net of Anita at pilatesanita@gmail.com
 Nov.14 - 17th Lisa Smit - clinician. Ask for flier (at Morning Light Stables)
 Nov 17th - Ken Borden - Mandy riding
 Nov. 23rd - WPDA Banquet - bring a door prize for silent auction.
 Nov. 24 - Robin Birk lessons at Coventry - to sign up with Robin leave a check for 55 in the mail box (made out to Robin Birk) and let me know.
 Dec.15th - Christmas Party and Let the Games Begin...
 November - March 30th - Winter!

Coventry is Magical



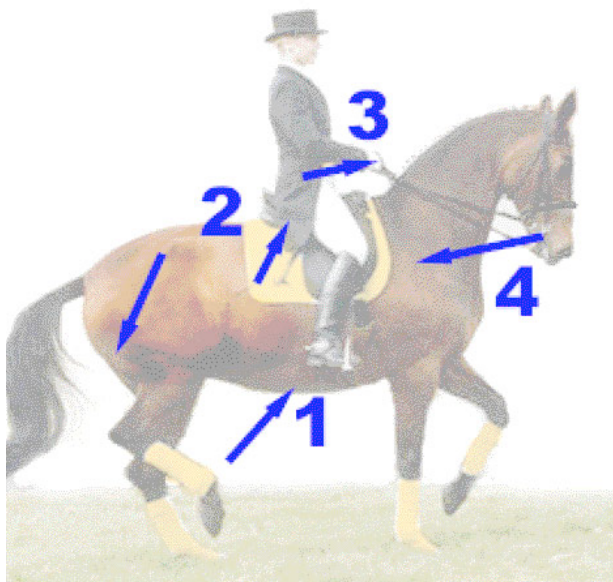
One day I took the quad around the farm, and I swear I said to myself, 'maybe I will find something interesting.' Olaf, the long haired cat was chasing young bunnies in the field and at the top of the hill under the neighbors apple trees was a white deer. I always knew Coventry was magical. Last night when I walked Max (aka Hollywood) around 11pm this white deer was eating in the side pasture next to the outdoor arena. So between all the amazing horses, a white deer and Simon the Siamese cat with four white paws, I know there will be a unicorn soon!

I know I have not had newsletters out as often as I used to, but with winter coming, I am sure I will have more time. And, most news now goes on

Face book. Yes, Coventry has a Facebook page please like it so you can always know what we are up to - here is the link - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Coventry-Equestrian-Center/168359289851372>

Also, I write a monthly article on Home Schooling Your Horse and those articles can be seen on Facebook and/or visit Pittsburgh Pet Connections! Here is the link to the October edition look for my article in the magazine. The article is about Longitudinal and Lateral Balance in the Horse- <http://www.pghpetconnections.com/October-2013/Pittsburgh-PetConnections-Magazine-October-2013-Digital-Issue/>

**"If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere."
 -- Frank A. Clark**



For the November issue of Pgh Pet Connections the article was on the Ring of Muscles/Aids - and this newsletter is talking about the ring of muscles/Aids too. Yes, the clearer your aids (riding position) on the horse the more clarity you will have riding! Sounds easy doesn't it!

Acquiring a good riding position should be the first goal when learning to ride, then learning to apply the aids in rhythm with the horse's gaits the second goal ... ~~~ lets face it, learning to ride is a life time process! Link to November issue - http://issuu.com/pghpetsmag/docs/pghpetsconnections_nov2013web_2?e=6029391%2F5399303

Ring of Aids

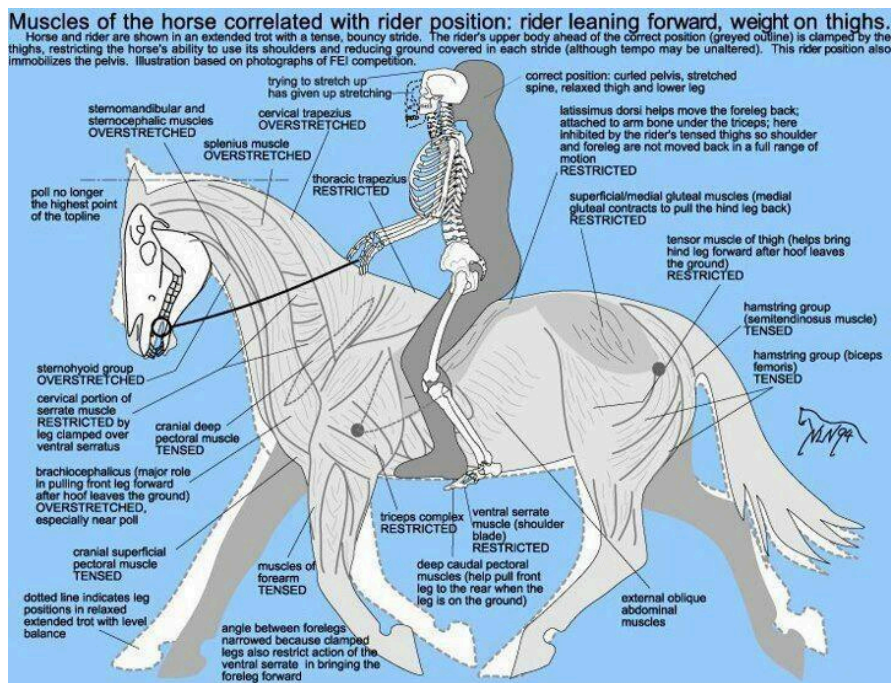
I first heard about the Ring of Muscles by reading articles by Karl Mikolka in Dressage & CT ~ circa 1980. The Ring of Aids, is activated when the rider's aids connect with the horse's muscles. Simply, the rider's leg asks the horse to move forward, the horse goes through the seat and then the rider receives the forward energy in the hands. The horse's forward stride is then recycled back to the horse's haunches via the rein or a half halt and the cycle begins again.

There is really no beginning or end of this circuit, (the ring of aids) as it is a continuous flow back and forth between the horse and the rider and rider and horse.

The photo above illustrates how the Ring of Aids works with the actions of the aids being numbered in order of their use. I described each number and how it works. (I hate to say, I forget where I got the photo.)

Number 1. The rider's leg squeezes the side of the horse and the result is the hind leg is drawn forward as the horse's abdominal muscle shortens. This is a natural reflex, as the horse's abdominal muscle will shorten as the rider's leg squeezes and pulls the hind end forward.

2. The horse's hind leg which is connected to the back muscles then pulls and lengthens the longitudinal muscles that stretch and move under the rider's seat. The rider's seat receives, absorbs and allows the energy from the hind legs to travel through the seat and over the top line along the



back of the horse. The seat can then allow or inhibit the horse's movement. As Waldemar Seunig says in his classic book Horsemanship - "the horse's back should come up and massage the the rider's seat as the horse's back lifts!" This is classical basic training of the horse!

3. The riders's hands or rein contact then receives the energy or forward stride of the horse's hind end through the reverberation of the rein. As a result, the horse moves from the back to the front. Or, as Karl Mikolka would say from the 'tail to the tongue' and, as a result, the whole horse is connected to the rider and the three natural aids: leg, seat and hands.

4. All of the horse's forward movement is then captured via the mouth of the horse thus tail to tongue. Lets hope the rider has a receptive hand and is not pulling or hanging on the horse's mouth. With this cycle or ring of aids being 'connected' it is then repeated every stride. That is why the masters say, "you rider every stride."

The blue illustration above is a more in depth description of how the whole process works. The title of Nancy Nicholson's book is BioMechanical Riding and Dressage: A Rider's Atlas.. I have a copy if some would like to view it. Tons of illustrations in this book with descriptions

The Value of Lunging...

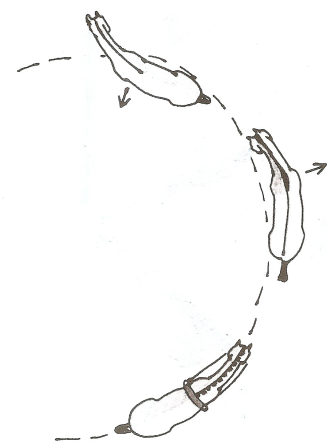
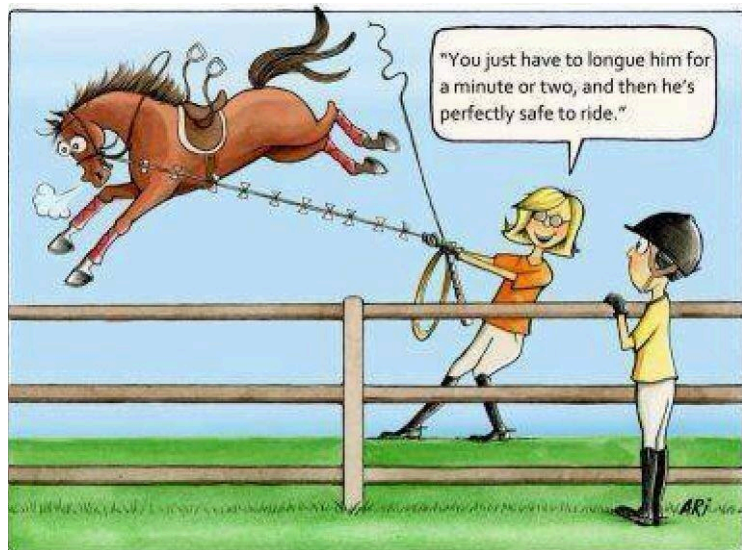
I know a lot of riders think lunging is just putting a horse on the end of a rope and spinning it in circles to get the energy out. I use lunging as training to develop the top line by teaching stretching, encourage and train rhythm, teach voice commands, release tension and/or knots in the the spine dot dot dot!....

Lunging is an art and done correctly it will also help to develop the rider's aid coordination and develop the eye. However, to develop good lunging skills you must do it regularly!

Learning to use side reins (correctly) when lunging will add so much value to your horses training. Lunging in side reins trains horse to go on a circle straight keeping the shoulders in alignment with the haunches ☞

Over the winter, Kristin will be offering a series of training seminars on Lunging, Chewing the Reins out of the Hands, Relaxed Rhythmic and Round, Putting your horse on the bit, off the Wall Riding, and Lateral Work.... How about Everything you wanted to know about Basic Training but never got it clearly explained!...

SMART PAK - Did you know you can order anything from Smart Pak and have it delivered to Coventry for free using the buddy system? So if your horse needs a wormer and you can't get to the store just go on line and have it delivered! Also, if you are a USEF member you get an additional 5% off all items! Cool!



ENJOY THIS WARM WEEKEND! Intro to PILATES for Riders this Saturday in Coventry's lounge

