

Texas horse trainer comes east to Galilee



By Steve McConnell

Stuart Rybak, of Damascus, and Craig Cameron, of Bluff Dale, Texas, pose with Rooster at a equine training clinic on Wednesday in Galilee - northern Wayne County.

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By Steve McConnell

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Galilee -

Wise eyes watch every misstep, imbalance, shortcoming between horse and rider, as they search for unison and trust, a task that takes time, common courtesy, and patience.

The observance of Craig Cameron, of Bluff Dale, Texas, and Stuart Rybak, of Damascus, matters today, as they impart the learnt skill of horsemanship - riding well - at a clinic held within an indoor arena at Rybak's farm, located in a place aptly named Galilee, a northern Wayne County hamlet with a God's Country feel. Wearing a brimming, white-cowboy hat, blue-jean jacket, and calf-length dirtied boots, the Texan sits upon his steed naturally, watching riders from New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, 15 in all, discover the nuances of riding and the gentle, sometimes fickle, mind of the horse beneath.

"Drop your trot," says Rybak, also sporting cowboy wear, who was mentored by Cameron on the craft a decade ago. "Right hand up, left leg back," he reminds a rider as she guides her horse nearly perfectly around

the earthen-floor arena, with men and women riders observing since their turn may be next.

They trot and canter on command, a booming neigh arises from time to time while steam forks incessantly from the horses' nostrils on this brisk Wednesday afternoon.

Before breaking for lunch, Rybak reminds all of an inconvenient truth: "The horse can sense the level of the rider."

A slightly uncomfortable one found out when her horse balked, tossing her to the ground, unscathed fortunately.

There's not too much to know about a horse, Cameron said with a grin.

A life-long rancher, Cameron one day made it his passion to communicate his knowledge of breaking and training horses - with care and no aggression - to just about everyone.

"Lessons where you work with the student and the horse - physically, mentally, emotionally. Not through pain, not through fear, through understanding," said Cameron. "The people improve; therefore, the horse improves." "All great horsemen are students of the horse," he said.

And he's made quite an industry of his unique, equine philosophy.

Last year, the Texan was on the road for 44 weeks, 88,000 miles, conveying his style of horsemanship that he has honed over 23 years to all corners of the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

Rybak shares similar bucolic roots, a life raised on a Wayne County farm, colts and mares abound.

"I really had a respect for horses," said Rybak, who sought out Cameron to learn how to properly break - preparing a horse to be ridden - and tame.

He happened upon a Cameron training video; then off he went to the Lone Star State under the rancher's tutelage.

Rybak soon thereafter opened a horsemanship clinic in Galilee that offers all equine services imaginable, co-operated with his wife Elizabeth, a champion "English" style rider.

Bridging the horsemen's friendship formed ten years ago and the 1,600 mile distance between Galilee and Bluff Dale, Texas, Cameron held his first clinic in Northeastern Pennsylvania at Rybak's farm this week.

"These techniques are new to this neck of the woods," said Cameron.

Monday through Wednesday, so it went along these lines: a good horseman needs to be always willing to learning, willing to change, and accepting of the art form that it is.

"That's our passion," said Rybak.

For more information about Craig Cameron and Stuart Rybak go to: www.terracegreens.com and www.craigcameron.com

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