

Day 4:

At the start of yet another fantastic day, barn chores were completed and Bob awaited us at the arena for our morning workout. Today was full of frog jumps and sprints. Towards the end of the workout, we did lunges and burpees. Bob has been incredible with helping us all week. He has giving us a variety of exercises that we can go home and do to continue to build our strength and stamina. Today's clinicians were Shelley Francis and Debbie McDonald. I rode with Shelley Francis. Throughout the week I have been focused on building better balance and harmony between my horse and me. I have worked on making my half halt more effective and today it paid off. Valencio came out ready to work and using what I have learned this week, I was able to put Valencio in a better balance from the get go. Since he was balanced, we were able to work on actual movements. We started with shoulder in to get the bend we needed to work half passes. Shelley told me to gently push him forward for a whole stride to make sure I get enough power in the movement so we can really show off. We then moved onto the half passes. I needed to focus on getting the bend in the corner before the half pass and not waiting until I need to do the movement. Half passes are Valencio's favorite exercise so he had a lot of fun doing this exercise. Next, we worked on canter walks. I sometimes let Valencio walk to fast and consequently right before he picks up the canter, he shuffles a little. Shelley instructed me to keep my hands down, hold him enough so he knows not to speed up, and canter off. By the end, we had gotten several very good canter walks. We tried the transitions on the diagonal. This was harder than the circle because you had to keep the horse straight and on the same diagonal line. After the collected canter we let Valencio canter forward and Shelley told me to think about taking four or fives strides to bring him back to keep the movement smooth. The last part of our lesson was focused on extended and medium trot. I have a tendency to want to bring Valencio back from his extended trots to early. We worked on bringing the trot back in a shoulder in so I would think about keeping my inside leg on. This exercise helped me make smoother transitions and forced me to not forget to use my legs! In the afternoon we listened to farrier, Don Later, discuss correct shoeing. He started off by saying, "there is no corrective shoeing, only correct shoeing." He informed us on the different types of shoes horses use including the European Rocker shoes. This shoe is unique in that the toe is rolled up similar to our own tennis shoes. He also explained the different materials that shoes are made from, these being aluminum, rubber or plastic, and the most widely used, steel. Our next speaker was Jeremy Steinburg. He gave us an informative lecture on theory. He reviewed with us the training scale and reminded us that in order to correct a problem we have, we must return to this scale and find out what piece we are missing. The scale starts with rhythm and is followed by suppleness, contact, straightness/impulsion, and finally collection. We need to focus on achieving using what we can make happen. We cannot make relaxation or connection; those two pieces hopefully come when the rest of the scale falls into place. Jeremy also touched on the use of the flight response in our training. We use a reward/consequence training system to train our horses to do dressage. When they are good they get a treat and when they are back they get scolded. The whip is used to induce a flight response forward from the horse when

they ignore your leg. The whip is ONLY used for telling the horse to go forward and nothing else. The day was then wrapped up by finishing barn chores. It was another fantastic day! – Cassie Shimdt