

Walter Zettl Clinic

The next clinic at Houghton was the clinic with Walter Zettl, who was a dressage coach for the Canadian 3 day event Olympic team. Talk about somewhat intimidating! But he was very nice.

Because he has a very soft voice, a walkie talkie and earpiece were used for him to talk to the clinic participants. When I got to it, the earpiece had started doing some funny things, so sometimes I couldn't exactly hear what I was supposed to be doing, and probably looked like I was lost in space. But it was a really good experience.

Walter pretty much took me back to basics- we started with getting correct, square halts where Missy remained on the bit and did not move around. We did a lot of those halt/walk/halt exercises because I was tending to let Missy drift one way or the other and that was very apparent when we tried to halt properly. Next, he caught my tendency to not ride corners and took me back to basics, showing me how to ride my corners correctly and have her bent right into them and balanced. Most of the lesson was focused on either straightness or bending.

Missy was kind of tense and excited during the first part, part of which I now know was due to her having dressage-ed right out of her saddle tree size-wise, so that was the last time I used that saddle, as it was obvious it wasn't fitting her anymore. Toward the end of the lesson, she came onto the bit and began halting squarely and concisely every time I asked, keeping her body in a straight line, bending into our corners and just generally being much more balanced and collected, tracking under herself, and a pleasure to ride.