

JJ Tate Symposium

Forty-five auditors and twenty riders participated in the NCDCTA/JJ Tate Dressage Symposium (May 19-20). The event, which was hosted by Lynn Leath at her North Star Training Center in Chapel Hill, focused on the importance of rider position in correctly and effectively influencing the horse.

All photos by Cathy Fletcher



JJ used the whip to represent the horse's barrel, and demonstrated the proper positioning of the seat and legs in order to "wrap" the horse around the rider's legs

Mary Tompkins on Leander



"JJ stretched and positioned riders' legs, emphasizing that "the knee must close without tightening the hip...this will help the toes to stay in. The leg is draped and not pinching which should result in a kneeling feeling."

Mary Tompkins on Leander



JJ explained that "power in the pelvis (is created by) swinging in the seat bones...To go forward, your pelvis will make an oval shape; to collect, turn the oval into a circle." JJ further emphasized that "the seat bones direct the hind legs;" and in the canter, "the inside seat bone strikes off like a match, so each stride is its own depart."

Jeanette van Mill on Yze fan Vels



JJ showed Mary Tompkins (on Leander) how to position her lower leg, reminding riders “to keep the zipper of the boot away from the saddle.”



JJ helped Julie Atteberry to encourage her horse, Graceland to relax and stretch into the contact, telling her to think of her seat bones as “two flashlights pointed in the direction you want the horse’s hind legs to travel.”



JJ explaining to the auditors the consequences of dropping a shoulder and allowing weight to slip to the outside

Auditor Debra Ray, of New Hill, summed it up best: “What a great education weekend I had auditing the JJ Tate clinic...she helped riders from training to upper levels make changes in their positions that would better influence their horse. The results were amazing. JJ gave each rider exercises they could use to improve their horse, along with homework, stretches, and warm up suggestions to work on. She was very engaging, positive and fun. All in all it was a fabulous symposium. I came away with many tools to add to my riding tool chest.”

“Cathy Fletcher, of Washington, also concluded that it was a weekend well spent. “JJ’s lively and creative imagery made new concepts easier to grasp.” Fletcher also appreciated the opportunity to see twenty different horse and rider combinations, and to observe how JJ was able to tailor her approach to significantly improve each pair’s performance”

“Mebane-based instructor Jennifer Mitchell concurred, “It is always beneficial to watch good instructors teach, and JJ is EXCELLENT. I picked up some wonderful new tools to share with my students as well as to apply to my own riding.”