What? No Cook Book? Some very personal observations and thoughts

Beginning of October seemed to be a perfect time to participate in a seminar about the Nevzorov method. I packed my bags and drove from South Carolina to the Canadian Province of Quebec to meet with Michael Bevilacqua and Cloe Lacroix and participants to hear first (well actually second) hand about the Nevzorov method. Having read all the anthologies, seen all the movies and read the book "The Horse Crucified and Risen", I still was a little unclear what really to do with my horses. Now that I am not riding anymore and am no longer demanding performance of my horses, I hoped to get a recipe of how to start, how to continue, how to proceed.

In that respect I became disappointed. While it seemed fairly clear what to do during the theory part, it became patently clear that it wasn't that simple during the practical instruction part of the seminar. It is simply extremely difficult to break with old patterns of dominance, insistence, "I want", being right, and so on. Taking all of a sudden all of the horse into consideration is a huge task for the otherwise indoctrinated human.

Michael demonstrated foremost the enormous patience that he has and how little of his ego is involved in the dealing with the horse. While I really was looking for concrete instructions how to deal with horses now in general and one that I have my mind set on in particular, I learned an entirely different lesson. The lesson of how to interact with another being. It really does not matter if it is a horse or if it is another human being. It does not matter if it is a cat or a dog. We have to start to consider that we share the planet with every one of them.

Having given and participated in a myriad of seminars over the last forty years, there was a single prevalent pattern. The seminar leader always made something happen. He or she always had to supply some "Wow" effect. In this seminar this "Wow" effect was conspicuously missing. There was no cook book approach; there was no "Do this or that". Even though some rules were told like that of not repeating a lesson endlessly, stopping a lesson after 10 minutes, and praising the horse after every task that he understands, there was very little of "do it this way or that way". While this was new to me, it also was very refreshing.

Another thing that I really appreciated having been in many high-powered seminars was the fact that it didn't sound to me as if we had to achieve a certain goal. The interaction with the horse could take place on any level that horse and human were comfortable with each other. So with other words I do not have to become a little Nevzorov tomorrow and that removed a lot of personal pressure. I can go out and try some things with my horses and work them in a certain fashion and if that doesn't work, be creative enough to work them in some other fashion. The advice going into a session with a plan, did by far not mean that you should or could stick to the plan. It only meant to have a plan. And once you had this plan, you had to be flexible enough to change it if things didn't work out.

Of equal value in this seminar were the other participants. Given a challenge they really rose to the occasion and came up with very valuable advice and were just an extremely interesting, kind, and supportive group. To belong to a group that in 2 ½ days does not udder a single "no", "can't" "should" is extremely rewarding. Having struck new acquaintances and even struck some friendships certainly was

worth the long trip up North. Meeting kind hearted, knowledgeable and passionate seminar leaders is an opportunity not to be missed.

Affluenza a portmanteau of the word affluence and influenza. A word to describe the disease of too much of everything resulting in the sick and bloated feelings that result from efforts to keep up with the Joneses. An epidemic of work, stress, and indebtedness common to those who are afflicted with it. And those inflicted are the ones pursuing the American Dream. Unsustainable addiction to economic growth. Should be in Wikipedia.

In 1968 or 69 I owed a lot to horses because they saved my life. I had a little bit a difficult youth and talking to and being with horses has given me some sanity to see through all this. I thought I become a horse trainer and really give back to horses what they had given me by training correctly and what have you. Never realizing that what I did was not right. For some other reason the horse training days were replaced by hoof care.

Today I want to give back again to the horses to apologize for all the ones who had to endure my ministrations. Who had to go through the pain of being trained, who could not remove themselves from the process and therefore became part of my personal growth. From the time I was 12 years old I was told that it would take a lifetime to obtain the knowledge of a true horseman. But I was not told that it would take a myriad of horses to suffer from my ministrations to get the insight that I have today. I thought everyone has a certain mission in life and I thought that mine was to save the horses by putting better hoof care on them. Now I realize that if I just safe one horse from suffering, the ministrations of regular, natural or conventional horsemanship I may get a place among those who are not severely punished in the afterlife or in the next life.

Paranoia and fanaticism occupy minds that are both closed and fearful. Thomas L. Friedman

Mother nature is biology, chemistry and physics. Nothing else. She does not care about arts or poetry or anybody wanting to manipulate her. As a species you have to fit in. If you do not fit in, you may find yourself pretty soon on the list of the endangered species. And that counts for climate change and what every one of us has to do about it.