



Hey Neighbor



For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Groundwork Is Building Block For Riding Career

"Basically everything we do with a horse is building for its riding career."

Steve White, Augusta, opened his first presentation at the EquiFest of Kansas with that clarification. "We raise our horses to ride, and that's what we expect them to do," he added.

With four Arabians in the arena, including a sorrel yearling in a round pen, White's program was titled, "Arabians, Not Just a Pretty Face — Laying The Foundation."

"Arabians are kind of my specialty, but I've been fortunate to work with good horses of several breeds,"

explained White, who's shown successfully at the Quarter Horse Congress and World Show, Pinto Nationals, Paso Fino Nationals and Morgan Grand Nationals as well as training several horses for North American Trail Ride Conference competition.

"Every breed is different, but Arabians are a passion with me; my thing so to speak. There's not much that can't be done with Arabians when they're correctly trained," he contended.

"Some people like Arabians, and others don't," White professed.

While three of the Arabi-

ans had been trained and shown, the yearling had only been broke to lead, turned out in the pasture and given general nutrition and health care. White asked each of the handlers to do the same fundamental training techniques with their horses.

"Talk horse to them. They don't understand English," White emphasized.

"Communication is a big deal with horses," continued White, noting that some horses are calm and others get excited.

"We can control their movement," the trainer confirmed. "Clucking means for

them to move their feet and then point them in the direction to go."

The yearling was slower than the older horses in responding to commands, but soon moved around the pen as directed.

"Everything we're doing is working up to riding these horses," White restated.

Pointing out that Arabians are "enthusiastic," White admitted, "Some people think they also have their quirks."

"Arabians are really the sports car of the horse industry," the trainer insisted.

Although his Arabians "are pretty enough to show" and have collected many halter championships,

White declared, "I want to ride. These horses are riding horses. I really like to ride."

When one of the older horses was disobeying, and the yearling was jumping and running around the pen, White recognized, "Quiet comes from training."

As the horses responded to handlers' commands, White evaluated, "What we're doing on the ground transmits to riding. Leading to the right eventually means reining to the right. Leading to the left will become reining to the left. What is done on one side needs to be done on the opposite side. It's a two-way process."

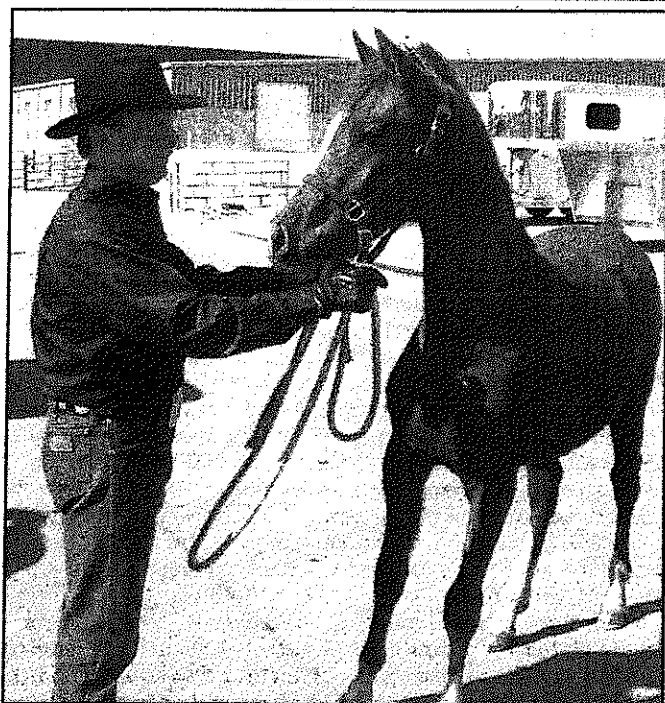
"This colt is starting to recognize the handler as his leader. Horses respond to a strong leader," White clarified.

"If you can't lead them, you can't ride them. There might be some exceptions, but basically that's the way it is," he asserted.

Before long, the yearling started coming toward his handler, instead of trying to get away. "Now work on desensitizing him by rubbing the whip over his back, hips and down his legs," White requested.

"Horses must have respect for their handlers. Respect is two eyes toward us. Disrespect is two heels toward us," he warned.

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Steve White, Augusta trainer, stopped his Arabian yearling outside the pavilion before a presentation on horse handling techniques at the recent EquiFest of Kansas in Wichita.

sponded to a tug on the lead, White urged the handler to release. "Take off the pressure when he does

what you ask of him," White suggested.

Even though Arabians are "more responsive than

some horse breeds," White said, "I want them relaxed when I'm riding."

As the horses followed directions given by the handlers, White verified, "The lighter they respond, the softer they'll be when we ride them."

Born and raised in the Wichita area and competing in horse shows at age five, White confirmed, "We are always looking for better ways to work with our horses. There is no cut-and-dried method that works the same with every horse."

Certain horses are stronger-willed than others, requiring more pressure in the beginning. "We might

have to shout now, so we can whisper later," White admitted.

Commending the horses on their advancements in the few minutes of work, White pointed out, "We want to quit before they burn out. Their reward for a job well done is to stop now, and then they'll be ready to do more next time."

White became affiliated with therapeutic riding when his wife Charlotte was injured several years ago. He trained Boo, his wife's half-Arabian, to work with her physical limitations. This training and Charlotte's tenacity have allowed her to continue riding.

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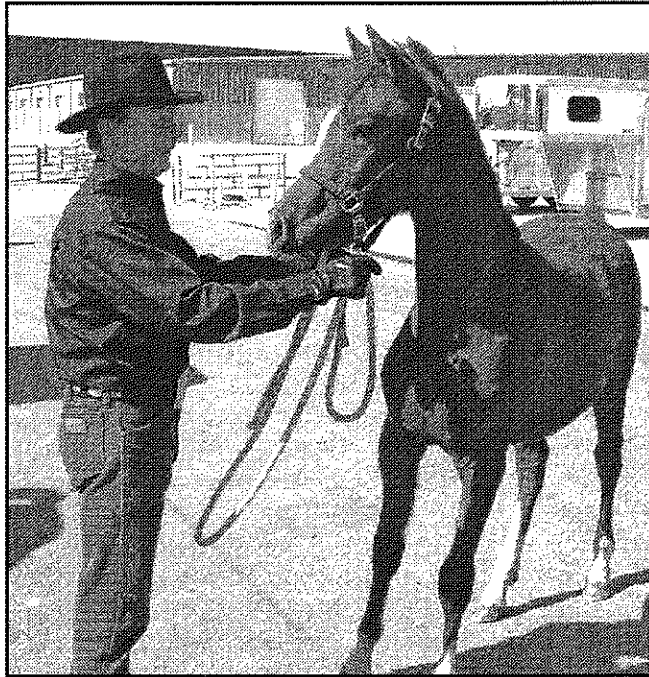
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