



Karl Slezak Eventing

Summer/Fall Updates

Summer/Fall Edition Issue 3, Volume 1

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In This Issue...

As the summer comes to a close it's time for another edition of the newsletter. This summer has been different than most. I have spent a significant amount of time working at home with my younger prospects and have brought several older competition horses back into work. Along with this, my students have had an extremely successful summer on the Ontario Eventing circuit as well as across the border at Richland Park Horse Trials. This fall, several of my young horses have begun their Eventing careers with great success. In this issue, Janelle Caldwell my working student for the summer returns to write another article on her experiences with Team Slezak. As well, we highlight the successes of Team Slezak during the summer competitions and let you all in on the overwhelming success of Equi-Challenge 2010 which I participated in this August at Halton Place. Also in this issue is a schedule of up and coming competitions and a new column that will feature training tips for all phases of eventing. Again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the individuals and sponsors who support me each year, I truly appreciate your dedication and commitment to Team Slezak.

Summer 2010: A New Perspective



From Left to Right: Karl and Master Plan at Grandview, Getting ready for a busy day of Coaching at Glen Oro and Schooling at home with Diamond Jim.

I must admit that this summer did not start off as planned. Several of my top horses ended up with minor injuries that required time off. This left me out of competition early in the season. While I missed being able to compete each weekend I gained a new perspective and was able to provide my students with extensive support as they worked to improve their dressage, tackle new cross country questions and finesse their show-jumping. I've also had the time to work with several young horses and have had the privilege to introduce each of these horses to the sport of Eventing. While I can't wait to get back into competition at the height of the sport this winter in Ocala with Kachemak Bay, I have developed a renewed appreciation for the education and training that goes into the young event horse. It is this work that matters most and I am convinced that each of these horses will make their mark on the Eventing world with me or with those who have now taken back the ride. I look forward to a strong finish to the Ontario Eventing season with Woodwinds Horse Trials this weekend where I will be riding two of my young horses: Master Plan who makes his Preliminary Debut and Diamond Jim who is an extremely talented new prospect competing for this first time this weekend. After this weekend, I will look ahead to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and hope to catch up with sponsors, friends and supporters at this event.

Equi-Challenge 2010: Barrel Racing and Beyond!

Equi-Challenge took place on August 26th at Halton Place and had upper level riders from different disciplines compete against each other in a discipline other than their own. We were put on four different teams and had an amazing participating in polo, barrel racing, show jumping and dressage freestyle. I am thankful to have a part of this phenomenal event. It was a great opportunity to give back to the riding community as well as to make connections with riders in other disciplines. We all had a fantastic evening and hopefully entertained all of the onlookers who came to support the cause. All of the funds raised at this event went to support the Ontario Veterinary College's Equine Sports Medicine and Reproduction Centre. This centre aims to provide equine specific care and access to top veterinary specialists. Diagnostic techniques and equipment at this centre are top notch and range from a high-speed treadmill to digital imaging, for performance-limiting lameness, respiratory and cardiovascular problems. The reproductive facilities include fertility evaluation, semen freezing, artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and other advanced reproductive technologies. I am hoping to be able to ride again next year at this event and will provide information to everyone prior to the event on the details of ordering tickets to attend. Aside from the entertainment value of watching the riders out of their chosen discipline, this event features gourmet food, a silent auction and it is a fantastic party!



Karl competing against Yann Candele in the Barrel Racing Competition

Behind the Scenes: The Life of a Working Student

By Janelle Caldwell



Janelle and Glendening Ariana at their first show together this summer.

This past summer has been the experience of a lifetime! I lived for 4 months straight at Wolf Run Farm helping Karl and Pat with daily chores and exercising the horses. Having the opportunity to always be at the barn around the horses was great but being able to work in a friendly environment where you look forward to waking up at 7:00 every morning to start another day of chores and riding is insane. Especially for a person like me who can literally sleep the whole day away! I always looked forward to starting the line up of horses Karl needed exercised each day. This work ranged from lunging, rehab walking or trotting and hacking as well as exercising competition horses.

After selling my own horse on our way home this past April I was not sure what I would end up riding for the summer. I wanted something I could work with and have lessons on but also be able to show for the summer as I was off to university in the fall. I found Annie, a beautiful large Canadian sport horse mare owned by David and Joy Levison from Glendening Farm. David and Joy offered Annie to me on a lease for the summer to ride and widen Annie's experience in the Eventing world. By the end of our time together Annie was competing at the training level and I had learned a ton riding such a different horse than what I was used too. Annie is a very talented horse and a quick learner, she is currently for sale so keep your eyes open!

Another horse I grew close to this summer was Karl's "Private Ryan" who was coming back after having 3 years off! I hacked Ryan every single day until he was ready to start some short trot work. Karl was given the pleasure to trot Ryan for the first time because Ryan was previously known to buck everyone off during their ride! He is the sweetest horse in the barn but was incredibly excited to get back to work. After suiting up in his protective gear, Karl got on Ryan and he was absolutely perfect, but the whole ordeal was very entertaining for the rest of us at the farm. I continued to ride Ryan and eventually had him on a strict weekly schedule of gallops, trot sets, jump and flat schools, and hacks of course. Ryan was definitely a very interesting and an incredibly difficult horse to ride! But I learned so much and enjoyed every second of it.

Having to leave my working position at Wolf Run to go to school was extremely sad and I wish I could have stayed. I had a lot more motivation to work with the horses than I do to work on chemistry homework! I still go up to ride when I have the opportunity but I am looking forward to returning next summer to board and ride again each and every day!

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Richland Park 2010: Success for Team Slezak in the CIC* *

Richland Park was an extremely successful event this year. Trudy Atrens and Clifton Interest finished 2nd in the Training Rider division while Katlyn Hewson finished 4th on Heartbreaker and 5th on her younger horse Jack's Irish Z in the Open Training division. Additionally, Frankie Simpson and Watson's Shelbreen competed in the CIC* * at this event and posted a dressage score of 59.4 to put them in 17th but then soared up the rankings to 3rd place with fault-free cross country and show jumping rounds. This was the top Canadian finish in the CIC* * and a personal best for Frankie and Shelbreen. Following the success of this weekend Katlyn has successfully moved her horses up to the Preliminary level and Frankie aims for Fair Hill International CCI* * on October 13-17th, 2010. Congratulations to all three of these Team Slezak competitors on their phenomenal results at Richland Park.



From Left to Right: Karl, Frankie and Watson's Shelbreen following their 3rd place finish at Richland Park CIC* * and Katlyn Hewson warms up Heartbreaker for a double clear Show Jumping round in the Open Training.

COMPETITION SCHEDULE 2010/2011

Event	Date
Woodwinds Horse Trials	October 10, 2010
Fair Hill International Three Day Event	October 13-17, 2010
Rocking Horse Winter I	January 28-30, 2011
Ocala Horse Properties Winter II	February 11-13, 2011
Rocking Horse Winter II	February 18-20, 2011
Rocking Horse Winter III	March 4-6, 2011
Poplar Place Farm Horse Trials	March 24-27, 2011
The Fork Horse Trials and CIC* * *	April 6-10, 2011
Ocala Horse Properties CCI Event	April 14-17, 2011
Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event	April 28-May 1, 2011

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Kross-Kountry 101 with Karl: Schooling the Ditch

Cross-country is all about teaching the horse to understand the questions at hand and to build their confidence over fences. One of the biggest mistakes we see amongst lower level riders is the idea that if they go as fast as they can while approaching the cross-country obstacles their horse won't stop. This usually works at the lower levels as their momentum carries them forward and over the fence but this approach has several downfalls; the biggest one being it's dangerous but additionally, the horse is never educated or allowed to understand the questions at hand, and essentially the rider is forcing the horse to jump out of fear and not confidence.

The most common time you see this style of riding is over ditches and that is because it appears to work. Typically though, this style of training comes back to haunt riders as they move through the levels and open ditches turn into trakeners, coffins and then the dreaded ditch-wall. All of these questions cause problems because these horses and riders have never understood or worked through the ditch question. As you add more "stuff" to the ditches or they become wider and spookier most horses will not jump out of momentum alone and generally they say "NO" and begin quitting.

When schooling horses over ditches for the first time I take a different approach. I like to teach horses to jump the ditch out of a walk. This strategy is beneficial on many levels; it provides the rider with control allowing them to get straight in a controlled pace for the approach and it allows the horse time to see, think and understand the ditch as a basic cross-country question. Now, don't get me wrong horses don't usually just hop over a ditch the first time they see it, they will typically stop and look or dance around in front of it. This is not a bad thing; it allows them time to think so that they can figure out the obstacle before going over it. At this point it is the rider's job to sit still, not provide any distractions, keep the horse straight and encourage them to look for the way to the other side. This can be accomplished by keeping lots of leg on providing the horse with confidence to jump. Once you start to feel them creep forward just before they jump make sure to grab mane because they typically jump it like it is a three-foot obstacle. Then it's just a matter of repetition. Once they are jumping the ditch with ease, walk, trot and canter over it then move onto something else but make sure to go and try another ditch before the school is over.

For me this has been the best way to teach a horse how to judge a ditch obstacle. As you go through the levels and add width, depth and other obstacles over and around the ditch horses jump it with ease because the ditch is no longer a question. With this schooling, the ditch in a ditch-wall is no longer an issue and most horses with the proper education will approach this question as a simple vertical, clearing it happily with confidence every time.



Karl and Kachemak Bay at Jersey Fresh CCI *** in 2009. Photo by Shannon Brinkman

Kooking with Karl: Butternut Squash Soup

A Team Slezak Favourite for Thanksgiving and Fall.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (2 to 3 pound) butternut squash, peeled and seeded
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2-3 cups chicken stock
- Nutmeg
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Cut squash lengthwise, brush both sides with oil, place cut side down in cooking sheet and roast at 375 for 60 minutes or until tender. In a large pot, cook onion with butter until softened. When squash is tender separate squash pulp from skin and add to the pot. Add enough chicken stock to the pot to cover squash by 1 inch. Return to heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Add maple syrup, salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste. Puree soup with a hand blender. Serve with 10% cream, or my favourite, a dollop of sour cream.



Contact Karl

Phone

647-229-0092

E-mail

supportkse@gmail.com

Website

www.karlslezakeventing.com



No hour of life
is wasted that
is spent in the
saddle.

Winston Churchill



Donations Still Needed

The costs associated with campaigning horses at this elite level of competition make it impossible for Karl to reach his goals without the support of generous sponsors like you. All donated funds will go to the maintenance, training and show fees for Karl's elite horses.

Developing and maintaining reciprocal relationships with all sponsors is a part of the Team Slezak approach and specific rewards are available upon request. We thank you in advance for your generous support.

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Until Next Time.....

Karl Slezak