

In Memoriam: Peter Speckmaier

by Sabine Kells

January 9, 1955 - February 5, 2012

On the first Sunday in February, we lost one of the driving forces in the barefoot movement, and one of the first and most widely traveled teachers in the world of Strasser Hoofcare.



All photos courtesy Sabine Kells

Many of you know him personally from hoof or Chiron seminars, which he taught for many years all over the globe. All of us have seen his graphics in the various Strasser books and his own *The Centaur Reborn*, and both graphics and animations in the powerpoint presentations for Basic Seminars. Many horses were restored to soundness from hoof, back, or psychological problems by Peter, and many owners learned about proper hoofcare, nutrition, and fearless riding methods from him.



Peter was the first licensed Strasser seminar instructor in the world, and the first course instructor, aside from Dr. Strasser herself. Here he is teaching an August 2006 course.

I only found Dr. Strasser through a German tourist, whose horses were trimmed by Peter. He corrected my first hoof photos via snail mail, and he held the first info evening I attended, making me realize I had to meet Dr. Strasser and learn all there was to know. But during all those years that followed, Peter remained teacher and mentor, friend and colleague, a staunch supporter I could always count on.

Peter had been a vehicle driving instructor before he found his way to Strasser hoofcare, and he put his intuitive and acquired knowledge of how to teach effectively to good use in the Strasser world. He was one of the first students of Dr. Strasser's hoofcare classes, graduating in 1990, the same year he became a Chiron jumping instructor. In the years that followed, Peter

became the first licensed Strasser seminar instructor in the world, then the first course instructor aside from Dr. Strasser herself. In addition to being an active SHP and trimming tirelessly at home, he traveled the world to help spread Dr. Strasser's information and knowledge, as well as giving Chiron seminars, despite a number of heart attacks and other health challenges. But the dissemination of this knowledge was more important to him than any personal concerns.

He taught not only hoofcare, but equine nutrition, saddle and tack fitting, riding and jumping. He rehabilitated horses with hoof problems, back & postural problems, and psychological problems. In the Chiron seminars, he helped riders connect on a whole new level with their horses, many getting willing cooperation from their mounts for the first time in their lives. He was an avid computer guru, always utilizing the newest bits of technology. I still remember him looking at my (admittedly quite outdated) laptop, and asking "Where do you shovel in the coal?"

Peter was a big man, tall enough that we had a hard time shoe-horning him into my rather small car (it worked better with the sunroof up) when I picked him up at the airport or drove him around during practicums and seminars. His stature made him someone who could easily have been intimidating, but the reality was the total opposite: he was one of the kindest, gentlest, most supportive people I have ever met. He was that rare combination of person who not only had great knowledge and expertise and skill, but the ability to effectively pass this on to others. He was a caring and outstanding teacher, with a deep understanding of human nature, and endless compassion for both horses and people. He had an ability to relate to both, which immediately put them at ease and made them feel good. And his sense of humor was legendary, enlivening every seminar and making learning easy and fun and inspirational.

Peter was always ready to lend a helping hand—I remember him insisting on helping me move a big boulder on my farm once, using a long metal rod as a lever, not weeks after getting out of the hospital from his latest heart attack. And this was after him "jumping"—without a horse—the par-cour laid out at the Chiron seminar the previous weekend.

Very little could faze him, and any sort of emergency was handled with calm competence and that wry sense of humor. He was a natural leader, drawing people with his steady, confident, patient and kind manner and his endless energy. Even though he was at the forefront of



Peter coaching "rope jumping" during a 2002 Chiron Seminar in Agassiz, British Columbia.

the barefoot movement, as the first person to be licensed to present Strasser seminars, he didn't judge people—and we all know how difficult it is not to do that, when you've just put someone through a Basic Seminar and they shrug it all off and say that their farrier's shoeing doesn't hurt their horses' feet. But Peter could do that; he could take that step back (albeit with an eye roll and a muttered word or two in that Bavarian accent of his), and let people find their own way to the truth.



Peter teaching during the Agassiz 2002 Chiron Seminar. (Sabine Kells in foreground.)

He was also an incredible source of seemingly endless knowledge of every variety imaginable—no matter what problem or issue you came to him with, he usually had, or could come up with, an answer or a solution that worked. Part of this was simply his vast experience; but beyond that was a keen awareness and ability to utilize his intuition.

In the latter years, he spent more of his time as a riding instructor, passing on a world of knowledge and skill to the next generation.

He was a true and loyal friend, and he will be missed more than words can say. 🍷

Please see a continuation of this tribute to Peter Speckmaier in the **Online Extras pages**, available only in the PDF edition of this issue.



Strasser Worldwide Institute for Holistic Horse and Hoofcare
 Fifth International Conference 2012 • Stará Živohošť (near Prague) in the Czech Republic

Strasser Worldwide Institute for Holistic Horse and Hoofcare presents:

5th World Conference for Natural Hoof and Holistic Horse Care and A Call For Papers and Sponsors

Innovations in Diagnostics and Nutrition for Equine Health and Rehabilitation

Conference location: Stará Živohošť' (near Prague), in the Czech Republic

September, 29 – 30, 2012 (C.E. Sept. 27 & 28, 2012, C.M. Meeting Oct. 1, 2012)

The World Conference provides a forum for the exchange of information on current developments, their applications and opportunities in the expanding field of holistic equine care. As with the previous conferences, the aim of the 5th World Conference is to provide insight into the exciting extent of growth taking place in the equine soundness industry. Coverage will include not only traditional healthcare services, but also the latest holistic therapies and systems.

Fly into the Prague International Airport in the beautiful, major metropolitan city of Prague. The conference facilities are situated in the landscape along the Vltava (Moldau) river, best known from the symphonic poems "Má vlast" of Bedřich Smetana.

Keynote speakers:

Dr. Hiltrud Strasser, DVM-PhD - Navicular Syndrome - Disenchantment of a Phantom

For nearly three decades, Dr. Strasser has studied the causes and cures for lameness as well as other common health problems of the domestic horse. Using her research, she has developed a complete model for the care of the domestic horse.

Dr. Strasser will lead workshops and discussions on one of the most frightening words in the horse industry today – "Navicular." She will discuss what the word really means, how to diagnose and how to "remove the cause" to bring the horse back to health and soundness.

Dr. Steven F. Skinner, DVM, Dip. ACVIM-Neurology, SHP, President ESA - Equine Diagnostic Imaging

Diagnostic imaging is an exciting, rapidly changing area of equine medicine. Using non-invasive techniques such as radiology, ultrasound, CT, and MRI, we are able to visualize every structure in the equine hoof and leg. Dr. Skinner will speak about the techniques used to obtain the best imaging for the horse and interpretation of those images and lead a radiology workshop.

Carol Layton B.Sc, M.Ed - Balanced Equine Nutrition

Rather than feeding a hoof supplement to fix brittle and cracked feet or a coat supplement to fix a dull coat, consider feeding a more than adequate nutrient and balanced mineral diet based on the whole diet.

Ms. Layton will lead a nutrition workshop including a sample calculation of hay / forage analysis to determine the needs of the horse. Carol Layton is an independent Australian nutritionist, trained by Dr. Eleanor Kellon.

Call For Papers

For additional conference topics - including but not limited to, the following:

- Nutrition
- Herbs for horses
- Nutritional values of feed and fodder
- Diagnostics
- Iridology
- Kinesiology
- Blood and hair analysis
- Natural hoof-care
- Holistic horse care
- Lameness rehabilitation

Sponsorship Opportunities:

Our goal is to provide an affordable forum for discussion within the topic of holistic equine care and soundness. To keep the registration costs low, we rely on support from our sponsors, and in return will endeavor to provide as much recognition for sponsors as possible, leading up to and during the conference. This is an excellent opportunity to increase your visibility and brand awareness, while supporting development within the horse industry.

For further information, registration, paper submission and sponsorship guidelines go to: <http://www.worldhoofconference.org> or e-mail registration@worldhoofconference.org

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In Memoriam: Peter Speckmaier (Cont.)

(Cont. from Page 23 of this issue.)

Peter's Life

A brief history of Peter's life, translated, condensed, and paraphrased, from (Peter's partner) Gisela Dinauer's memorial speech at his funeral:

Peter was born on January 9, 1955 in Gilching, where he grew up with his parents and two older sisters out in the country. His mother was always proud of him, said he was a rebel but always kind and never really caused her grief.

As a 6 year old, he had an experience which he never forgot. He was out in a meadow with a friend when a rider came down the path and cantered into the forest. This experience began his fascination with horses, which lasted his entire life. From that point forward, he was a permanent fixture around the horses of the traveling circus, and afterward he spent his childhood and youth at the local riding stable.

After high school, he became a mechanic, then spent 12 years in the military, where he received driving instruction training, and was a driving instructor for several years. Already, he was very well-loved as an instructor and educator. During this time, he met a captain who became an absolute role model in his didactic and methodical teaching abilities, and who formed Peter's future seminar instructor style.

In 1981, he met his future wife Karin at the riding stable; she was the love of his life. They married in 1986 and had wonderful but few years together.

When he was finished with his military service, Peter became a master mechanic, working independently at a car dealer, training apprentices and working on vehicles. Around the same time, he opened a riding stable with a friend, with the support of his wife, mother, in-laws, and Alexandra, whom he'd known since she was 15 and to whom he had been like a second dad. His wife became very ill and died in 1987 at the age of only 23. It devastated Peter and broke his heart, which never recovered. Yet it gave his life an interesting and positive new direction.

He spent much time trying to make good riding horses out of his horse, Janosch, and Alexandra's horse, and later added instruction to riders, as well. Then he discovered a book by Rolf Becher, who was among other things a Chiron instructor. His knowledge was endless, and Peter spent many years with him, learning from him. Suddenly, everything was clear, and Peter began to truly understand horses. Both horses and riders profited greatly from this.

In the early 90s, he ended up taking the place of a friend who couldn't make it to a seminar she'd signed up for: a Basic Hoof



Peter Speckmaier
1955-2012

All photos courtesy Sabine Kells

Seminar with Dr. Strasser. Peter was fascinated with the information and quickly decided to take the education to become an SHP (Strasser Hoofcare Professional). He gave up his job at the car dealer, and soon was teaching Strasser hoofcare around the world. He went to England, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and more, and always used the travels as a chance to also teach Chiron seminars.

At home, the days were spent trimming horses, and stopping by to visit friends and family in the late afternoons. Alexandra looked after the office work, and his in-laws looked after his home. On Sundays, his mother and Alexandra and her daughter came to visit. Peter knew how to raise a child from the time he was 10 years old, and looked after his niece.

Peter was very close to his mother, who died in 2006. He took that loss very hard.

In 2000, he met Gisela, to whom he'd been recommended as an SHP. From the day she met him, he turned her entire idea about horses and riding upside down. She changed the way she kept

them, fed them, and looked after their hooves, and the horses grew healthier and rideable. It left her strapped for cash, but with very happy horses. In 2004, Gisela came to one of Peter's Basic Seminars, and during her divorce in 2006, Peter was always there as a good listener and source of advice. At the same time, he was

tireless in teaching her how to use a computer. They grew very close, and over the next few years came to share their lives together. Peter started teaching at the riding stable Gisela was renting, coming up with a host of wonderful ideas for it. His gift for teaching was extraordinary.

They were together for 4 years, the happiest time of Gisela's life. He turned her untalented, pokey horses into show stoppers who suddenly wanted to canter and began jumping with enthusiasm. Some even learned the beginnings of high school dressage. He was an important part in Gisela's children's lives, as well, who loved him and respected him greatly.

The motto of his life was the golden rule: that which I expect of others, I will do myself, first.

He left a huge legacy of knowledge.—Gisela



Peter was a very talented teacher. Here he is instructing during the 2002 Chiron Seminar in Agassiz, British Columbia.

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Peter Speckmaier, cont. from page 38)

When word was sent out about Peter's passing, the response from people all around the world was incredible. Here are some of the anecdotes and goodbyes from people who had the pleasure and privilege to meet, work with, and learn from Peter.

Anecdotes & Goodbyes

Hiltrud Strasser, Germany: I have always held Peter in the highest esteem, and for many years we worked very well together. He supported me fantastically! We very much complemented each other, since in the beginning I had no idea about the use of computers and powerpoint work.

His passing has cost me an important partner and colleague on this journey!

Liv, Norway: This was very sad news. Peter has left an empty place in the Strasser world. I remember him as a polite, gentle, knowledgeable and not very loud person, with a good sense of humour and a good (yet not healthy!) heart. I remember how patiently he stood by the saw in Hiltrud's garage, cutting cadaver hooves at our exam-period in 2003.

I am so sorry he is gone, sorry for his family and friends, and sorry because the world has lost an important and good horseperson.

May he rest in peace.

Betsy, USA: This is such sad news.

I didn't spend a lot of time with Peter, but when I did it was great fun!

The world conference ball proved that Peter had many talents. He gave me my first waltz across the ball room :) Made me feel like a princess...

What a wonderful man and teacher :)

He will be greatly missed!

Heike Veidt, Switzerland: My first Basic Seminar was with Peter in 1996; I took my Wotan, and he got the trim that saved his life. I took a video of Peter trimming, and worked off that for years on my own and other horses.

Unfortunately, I lost the tape when I moved, and in Switzerland I buried all my knowledge and listened to other people; Wotan went downhill again.

In 2006, with my new seminar with Peter in Tuebingen (see photo), everything came right again.



Peter instructing during the August 2006 Strasser Hoofcare course in Tuebingen, which Heike Veidt attended.

Photo courtesy Heike Veidt

Thorsten Kaiser, New Zealand: I remember the first time he came to NZ in July 2004. He arrived at the airport with a very light jeans jacket. I said: "I trust you have a warmer jacket with you, it's winter here!"

He looked at me with this extremely shocked expression in his face, "You mean New Zealand is not a tropical island?"

"Aehm, no!" Well, he continued to wear thermal underwear for the rest of his stay.

Lucie, France: Andrea met him during her first World Conference, and she has a story about him. She was sitting near him and started to talk with him, but she didn't know who he was. They talked about the holism of the [Strasser] method. She was really surprised that an SHP knew how to manipulate a sacroiliac joint. And Andrea realised that she had paid an osteopath for many years, without eliminating her pony's hoof problems.

Tamlyn Ennor, New Zealand: How very sad I am to read this news. I regarded Peter very highly indeed. His humour brought his teaching alive and has impacted me for life.

Peter was my real introduction to Dr. Strasser's work; I attended his first NZ seminar. His attention to detail had me hooked from his first correction of my knife blade angle.

I will never forget this man. I am sure that his touch is still on my knives! Peter left an amazing legacy in so many of us around the globe!

Kimmy, Christchurch, New Zealand: OMG that's so sad, my sincere sympathy to all Peter's family and friends.

I met Peter when he was here in New Zealand for one of our SHP practicums some years ago. He was a lovely man, and so very knowledgeable, and very passionate about the welfare of our equine friends—something I believe is a common thread to all who follow the Strasser path for the betterment of horses.

Very sad news indeed. He will always be well remembered.

Gill Nash, UK: During my training as an SHP in 2004, Peter Speckmaier came to the UK to run a jumping seminar using the Chiron method and tell of his findings regarding equine nutrition. This was very brave of him, as his English at this time was no more than basic.

If my German had been as limited, I certainly would not have attempted a seminar in a foreign country. But Peter had a gift for making himself understood, and I only needed to translate anything for him once. We all benefited very much from his visit.



Thorsten Kaiser riding Khan without a bridle during Peter's Chiron Seminar in New Zealand in 2004.

Photo courtesy Thorsten Kaiser

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Peter Speckmaier, cont. from page 39)

Sara Abbott, South Africa: I am very sorry to receive the news about Peter's death. I remember him well when he spent time guiding and teaching us in Natal while we studied for our SHP exams, as well watching a very exciting Chiron clinic held in Cape Town.

Martha, South Africa: I liked Peter and he even visited my yard in South Africa during 2003/2004, when we were doing the SHP course. I especially enjoyed his great sense of humour! I also attended his wonderful Chiron clinic at the conference in Canada.

Anne Daimler, USA: So sorry to hear about Peter. He was a very nice man.

I got to know him a little better at the First Barefoot Conference in Tuebingen, where I was given a room at the smaller hotel where he was staying. They did not speak much English there.

We ate breakfast together several times. He had to help me order breakfast. When asked how I wanted my eggs, I said "scrambled." Peter explained they only served boiled eggs and were asking how I wanted my eggs cooked. When my boiled eggs arrived, I broke the shell, dumped them into a bowl, and proceeded to chop them up before eating them. Peter watched me, then burst out laughing, saying, "See! Scrambled eggs after all."

He will be missed.

Donna Buck, SHP, New Zealand: Sad news, a terrible loss for all concerned and especially in our organisation.

I can only share my memories of him teaching my first 3 day seminar. He struggled a bit with his English, but his passion for what he was teaching was so obvious even to the "untrained"

(me) at the time. What was making this man tick regarding this new field of learning I was stumbling into? He inspired me to want to learn more.

My sincerest condolences to all and his family.

Steffi Rethwisch, NZ: Peter, what a lovely man, he had a compas-

sionate eye and ear for those who could only speak in their silence and maintained his humanity by spicing it with irony and sarcasm for the ears of those who spoke in words. Likely for the sake of coping himself with all that misery our equine friends are subjected to. Unfortunately, he took to heart what he saw and heard and had several heart attacks; it does take courage to let things affect you rather than closing up and ignoring them...

He introduced me to Google Earth.

I remember his comments to one of the German dressage instruction videos, showing a horse short of rollkur and the commenta-

tor's text: "Und so wird das Junge Pferd langsam and die Versammlung herangestreckt". ("And this is how the young horse is slowly stretched toward collection.")

Peter's comment "Das ist absoluter Bloedsinn was der Kerl da verzaehlt, so ein Schwachsinn! Der weiss ueberhaupt nicht wovon er redet." ("That is utter stupidity what the guy is saying, total idiocy. He has no idea what he's talking about.")

And I remember his comment when Thorsten's horses were doing something they were not supposed to: "Bloody Arabs, they are all terrorists."

Rest in peace Peter, I am sure he will have a little batch in equine heaven, likely elsewhere too, especially in our memories and hearts.

Pamela Wonson, USA: I really appreciated everything that Peter did and had to offer. He was a great help to me and such a positive influence in my studies. Not only did I learn a lot about feet from him, but also about riding (in Germany, he taught some riding classes to some of the European students, which amazed and inspired me).

I am so grateful for all the fine instruction that I received through Dr Strasser's program and all the wonderful people that I met along the way.

Frances Guthrie, Canada: I am sorry to hear that Peter has passed away.

The very first time I met him, he had just arrived in Agassiz after that long flight from Germany and wasn't feeling well. I don't remember if Sabine or Dr. Strasser brought him to our motel room, hoping Mom and I might have something that would help. And we did: Peter took some of Riva's Remedies pro-colon for horses and was feeling well by dinner time!

The Chiron jumping clinic that I audited was a delight; tense horses were relieved of their uncomfortable bits and fitted with kind bitless bridles. Riders began to follow the rhythm of their horses, and horses began to look forward to following one another through the path of cavalettis and jumps. Right before our eyes, under the skillful tutelage of Peter Speckmaier, horses and riders became relaxed and beautiful jumpers!

I loved the opportunity to learn from Peter, from hooves, to saddles, nutrition to riding. To this day, I share with my students some of the horsemanship skills I learned from Peter. One of my

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2002 Chiron Seminar in Agassiz, British Columbia.

Photo courtesy Sabine Kells



Chiron Seminar in New Zealand in 2004.

Photo courtesy Thorsten Kaiser

Peter Speckmaier, cont. from page 40)

students has become an amazing rider, jumping bareback and bridleless in perfect harmony with her Arab—she is a perfect example of Chiron riding, naturally.

How fortunate for us, that people like Peter were willing to share their talents and skills! I hope that many other people are carrying forward what they learned from an amazing horseman.

Jane Speich, UK: What very sad news.

I remember Peter at the very beginning of my hoof journey when I was training in Germany. I had little German and he had little English.

During lectures, my translator (Melanie) was fabulous, but I do remember Peter saying that I asked too many questions! Whilst I was learning to trim, he only had to frown at me for me to know when I had got it wrong, just to nod when I had it right!

He went on to learn and teach in English, something I never mastered in German!

I am sure that he will always be remembered as being important in our lives and in the life of the horse.

Erica, UK: So sorry to hear about Peter. I was very saddened when I found out via The Horse's Hoof that he had passed away. My immediate thought was that he had such a big heart and he really cared. It never seems fair to lose such people or fair that his heart should be his weak point. I shed quite a few tears that day, even though I'd not seen him for years.

I never forgot what he taught me. He gave me the Chiron seminar to be able to teach it, but I never got to do enough training with him due to various circumstances. However, I have always wanted to get back out there and teach some clinics,

and in light of that, I had been thinking about contacting him.

I just remember Peter saying “candy for ze horses” a lot! I still to this day use the intention and focus that he taught. I still use the imagination of a cart horse when sitting on a fire breathing dragon or imagining a race horse when sitting on a—shall we say—less than expressive type! I also still ride in a forward seat down hills! I don't get much opportunity for jumping anymore, but I think I will start doing some poles and cavaletti with my one remaining mare again—maybe as a tribute for Peter.

The first Chiron I did was with an Arab gelding called Nifā who is owned by my friend. My friend told me how he totally refused to jump, and it was true that it was very difficult to persuade him

to even go near a pole on the ground. So me being up for a challenge and a big learning experience, I decided to take this horse, as I'd ridden him often and was very fond of him.

Thanks to Peter, it was one of the most amazing experiences with a horse I've ever had. Once Peter and I had got him over his initial fear with kindness, good intentions and some treat-based encouragement, this little horse just went from strength to strength. Peter told me to use lots of intention in my mind, which I did. We went through all the pole exercises and then it came to the first small cavaletti. He took off SO BIG it took me by surprise!

By the last day, instead of backing off the bigger jumps, he was attacking them with gusto—really flying and absolutely loving it. It felt amazing. Turns out he was exceptionally talented when it came to jumping! Of course, he flew his best when we took the bitless bridle off. It never ceases to amaze me how much better they jump or do anything with no bridle at all, even though we only ever used a bitless and very little contact. I still work towards bridle-less riding today as a way to see how good my relationship is with my horse, as well as for the pure joy of it. It is a bit of an obsession of mine to ride well with no bridle, and it all started with Peter who, over a few Chiron courses, showed me the delightful possibilities of a freer horse and what can be done when you set your intention and focus. I think it is so lovely for the horse to be as free as possible too, and to be able to express him or herself. The forward seat is also such an under-used bonus to horse riding these days—for starters, it gets you out of the way of the horse, freeing him up to move as nature intended.

I helped Peter teach a Chiron course in the UK, and also one in South Africa. It was enormous fun, and he will be sadly missed, but I will continue to put the message out there in my own small way.

Sabine Kells, Canada: I will never forget my first encounter with him. I had traveled to Germany to the place where the woman who had first told me about Strasser hoofcare kept her horse, and watched Peter trim horses there all day, tirelessly, from big warmbloods to minis (which he trimmed kneeling).

At the end of that long day, he held an info evening which opened my eyes to the hard fact that the years of lameness my horse had suffered were to be placed 100% at my feet.

The next morning, Peter held an impromptu Chiron jumping session, and after hearing that I was chicken about jumping, promptly stuck me on my friend's pony and sent me over a set of

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Peter demonstrating his own jumping skills during a UK Chiron seminar!

Photo courtesy Erica Lynn



Erica jumping without a bridle on Moose during a 2004 UK Chiron Seminar.

Photo courtesy Erica Lynn

Peter Speckmaier, cont. from page 41)

cavaletti jumps—after pulling off the little guy’s bridle, leaving me with nothing but that famous stirrup neck strap. Years later at Chiron seminars, Peter would still joke about the expression on my face when he pulled that headstall off...

Alexandra, the mother of Peter’s god-daughter (translated, condensed & paraphrased): Peter’s horse Janosch was a complete escape artist. No matter how complicated the lock, he could always get out of his box; then he ate all the oats and after that, from boredom, freed the other horses. Often, we’d get a call at work, had to drop what we were doing

and come catch our herd, because Janosch had freed them all. He was also extremely untalented in jumping, but one day he decided to jump over the gate to get out of the riding arena. Or try, anyway; unfortunately, he got hung up. Any other horse would probably have killed itself panicking, but Janosch only whinnied until we came running. Then he watched Peter cut down the partition, the saw right under his nose, and once he was free he trotted off with his head held high. Peter once used a beer bench for jumping training, which Janosch promptly destroyed by lying down on it. It obviously seemed a more sensible thing for him to use the bench for that, than for strenuous jumping practice. After this, he had to be jumped on the longe line, instead of being left to free jump.

During these years, Peter was an independent master mechanic and also did body work. He was very well liked at the car dealer, and he was always very happy until his wife Karin died (around 1986). It took him a long time to get over that, to begin living again at least a little. At that time, he started spending more and more time with Chiron, and in 1991 he met Eva, with whom he was together for a while. After the birth of my daughter, Peter often looked after her while I went riding; and since he was like a second father to me, he was the one who held her at the

baptism, and he was the only one who could calm her down after the cold baptism water touched her head. He rocked her in his arms until she fell asleep, which looked funny because Peter was so tall, and my daughter looked like a miniature doll in his arms.

His mother, despite her advanced age, helped out with the horses and took care of older people; on her 80th birthday she was honored for this. Peter took care of her until her death, which was a terrible blow for him. He had a very, very close relationship with her, and she was always so proud that she had such a decent and hard working son.

Not long after his mother passed, Gisela and her children came into

his life, and I was very glad that he had finally found someone who fit so well to him, and with whom he found such wonderful agreement in his views and hobbies. I think he finally found peace and was truly happy, as he often said when we spoke on the phone. He had a wonderful circle of friends and family around him in his last years.

Peter was always very important to me, he was a big role model and made me the person that I am. In my teenage years, he disciplined me, and once he spent the entire night looking for me, driving up and down the autobahn and the side streets around the barn, because he was afraid that

I’d had an accident with the motorbike. He was so angry! After that, I never forgot again to let someone know if for some reason I wasn’t coming to the barn, and always gave notice if I couldn’t keep an appointment, because I understood how worried this can make people. I taught the same to my daughter, and ever since have understood my parents much better.

Eva Goertz, Canada: Peter stayed at my house for a couple of weeks during his Chiron clinic trips to BC. I got to know him as a very loving, considerate and gentle person. I was very impressed by his relentless search to improve the content of his presentations in order to clarify it for the students. His English improved rapidly; his ability to memorize words he just heard once was astounding. In my mind I can still hear him say “Noooo stress” putting everyone around him at ease. On our travels we could not pass a Tim Hortons without stopping for his absolute favourite—chocolate timbits. I would just love to place a few on his grave site...I think that would make him chuckle. His love and passion for the horses will forever stay in my memory. Thank you, Peter, for what you did for the horses and riders that you touched in my part of the world.

Udo Riegel, Germany: It all started in 1993. Our horse, 1 ½ years old, had bad feet and didn’t want to move anymore. We called Peter, and he came from Munich to Frankfurt (about 400 km). Peter was always in a good mood when he worked, and I had many questions which he could always answer, and so I always wanted to know more about what he did. Because of the great distance, Peter could only come every 3 months, but we always got our “homework” and did it to the best of our ability. He asked me if I didn’t want to complete the training with Dr. Strasser. At Christmas 1995 I made my decision, became certified in 1996, and have been a member of the VdHP [German association for SHPs] since.

Thank you, Peter, for the good times I was allowed to share with you.

A note from Gisela, Peter’s life partner over the last years (translated, condensed & paraphrased): Gisela would like to thank everyone for their condolences and well wishes which have reached her from around the world since Peter’s death. It has meant so much to her, and given her strength at this time of loss. Thanks also to those who made it to Peter’s service, and to all those who could not, but

(continued on page 43)



One of the cavaletti grids that Peter used in his Chiron clinics.



Peter with Alexander Nevzorov at the World Conference 2006.

All photos courtesy Sabine Kells

Peter Speckmaier, cont. from page 42)

lit a candle for him instead. There will be a good-bye party for Peter in the spring at Gisela's stable, tentative dates April 29th-May 1st. Contact her for details at <info@the-horse-project.de>.

She would also like to thank everyone who sent donations instead of flowers and such, especially Dr. Strasser: the money went toward the funeral costs, for Peter's horse Sterni, and for the project which Peter and Gisela started together and which she intends to continue.

Gisela and Peter had always intended to look after their old Chiron lesson horses, who are retired and remain at Gisela's barn, eating her out of house and home. They are lovely horses (some are rescues) who have worked hard all their lives, and still teach the kids who come to their barn for lessons. Older horses have such quiet and wisdom in them, they are simply good for humans. Gisela wishes to keep them alive, and teach people how to get on with older horses even if they can no longer be ridden. Peter always supported her in this (see website www.the-horse-project.de).

Gisela also wishes to continue the Chiron teachings which Peter learned from Rolf Becher and expanded, training young people to live the ideals of Chiron and carry them forth into the world, not just as they concern riding, but their entire lives. Where this will lead, only time will tell. A few of the young students have already

begun reading Peter's books: one which he wrote (*The Centaur Reborn*), and others which he collected from many riding masters.

Many people have asked her for account information for sending in donations. An account has been created, and it will exist for half a year; then a decision must be made whether it will be used to help look after the horses in Gisela's care; or, if it has grown to a large amount, whether it will be used to set up a fund or scholarship. The first goal is to take care of Sterni, which Peter would have wanted; then Gisela will see for what else the money can best be used for (such as feeding the rest of her retired horses, whose well-being was important to Peter; educational materials for Chiron; and so much more). It will be faithfully administered.

Donation account: Chiron-Pferde, Sparkasse Freising BLZ 700 510 03, Account number 25409921, BIC BYLADEM1FSI, IBAN DE84700510030025409921. There is also a paypal account for those overseas, linked to Gisela's email address: info@the-horse-project.de. If anyone needs help with this, just contact her. 🍎

From The Horse's Hoof: Our sincere condolences to Peter's family and friends, and everyone who will miss his gift with horses.

Articles on Peter's **Chiron seminars** can be found here: www.thehorseshoof.com/Chiron.html



Photos by Mudsports



More Photos: Brego the Barefoot Spanish Mustang at the Henley Show!

(Continued from page 13)

For information on the Henley Show see: www.thehenleyshow.co.uk. The photos were taken by Mudsports and are reproduced with their permission. For other shots of the Henley show see: http://www.theimagefile.com/?skin=357240&Action=_VC&id=85222802&ppwd=27626gvs

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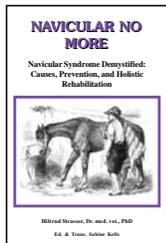
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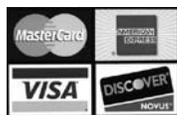
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