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Falling Star Ranch

Birgit Stutz

Chris Irwin Gold
Certified Trainer and
Coach

General Delivery
Dunster, BC, V0J 1J0

PHONE/FAX:
250-968-6801

E-MAIL:
fallingstar@valemount.com

www.fallingstarranch.ca

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Update from Falling Star Ranch

Where have the last few months gone? As I am writing this newsletter, we've already had our first cold spell of the season, minus 27 last weekend. The nights were beautiful, clear, and starry though, and the days brought sunshine and clear blue skies. Everything is blanketed under a foot of snow. Now the cloud cover is back, it's warmed up into the single digits, and the snow is falling softly. Winter, with its short days, long, dark nights, snow, ice and cold temperatures, is definitely here to stay, and it's a good time of year to reflect on the past few months.

We had a cool and very rainy summer – if it can even be called summer. We didn't seem to get more than a day or two without rain, which made it difficult to work horses consistently due to slippery footing in the outdoor arena. We spent a lot of time tarping and untarping the round pen, but at least we had one place to work horses in, even if it was only one horse at a time. On good days, we still managed to work eight to ten horses, but it made for some long, tiring days.

Due to a very rainy July, our hay didn't get cut until the beginning of August, which is unusually late. There was an abundance of hay, but the quality suffered some due to it being quite mature and getting rained on while drying. We are thankful though that we did get a hay crop off.

All the rain was good for our pastures though, especially after two summers of drought, and our herd enjoyed some grazing until mid-November!

Despite the rainy summer, we had a busy,

exciting, successful and fun-filled year here at Falling Star Ranch in Dunster.



Birgit resolving bridling issues

Besides teaching lessons and training horses at home, Birgit also taught a few lessons in nearby Jasper, gave a demo on equine body language, and travelled to Alberta several times to coach horsemanship clinics for women at Riversong Ranch in Whitecourt together with Kathryn Kincannon-Irwin. One of the clinics was a six-day workshop, which was a great experience for both coaches and students. Thank you to all our clients for your continued support. We look forward to working with you again next year.



Birgit demonstrates how to resolve feeding aggression during a workshop

Workshops for Women, Horsemanship Clinics

Birgit and fellow Chris Irwin certified trainer and coach Kathryn Kincannon-Irwin will be continuing their series of horsemanship clinics for women at Riversong Ranch in Whitecourt in 2012. We are hoping to offer three to four 2-day clinics as well as one longer one, possibly five to six days.

These clinics help participants improve all aspects of their horsemanship skills, groundwork and riding (Western and English), as well as building everybody's confidence, both the riders' and the horses'. These clinics offer a unique approach to handling and riding horses, all in a way that de-stresses both you and your horse, builds confidence, mutual understanding, and a solid foundation for long-lasting results. You will also learn how to read equine body language, improve the strength of your relationship with your horse, and learn how to ride in

a way that your horse truly enjoys being ridden.

Participants are welcome to bring their own horse or work with one of the horses from Riversong Ranch. For more information on these clinics contact Birgit. Clinic dates will be posted on the Falling Star Ranch website at the beginning of the New Year. To read the blog about one of these clinics for women, visit <http://fallingstarranch.wordpress.com/2011/04/12/horses-are-a-mirror-of-ourselves/>.

If you would like to host a clinic with Birgit at your facility, please email Birgit for more information. There are incentives for clinic organizers! Visit <http://www.fallingstarranch.ca/ClinicPage.htm> for the various types of clinics and workshops offered by Birgit. Clinics, workshops and demos can be tailored to the participants' and their horses needs.

Mentorship Program off to a great start

Falling Star Ranch's new mentorship program had a great start this year. We had one young woman from Holland doing a week-long mentorship stay, and continuing to take lessons with Birgit after that. A young woman from Switzerland, who currently trains and competes in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, did a two-month mentorship stay at Falling Star Ranch, and proceeded to participate in two train-the-trainer clinics with Chris Irwin, where she received silver certification in both groundwork and riding. Way to go Noia!



Noia riding Sam

The Falling Star Ranch mentorship program is tailored for those who would like to completely immerse

themselves into horsemanship and intensively study the methodology of world-renowned horse trainer, coach and clinician Chris Irwin.



Noia riding Bandit

The program is of various lengths, from one day to several months, and can be tailored to suit your needs. The mentorship program is different from our working student program in that the mentee isn't involved in the day-to-day running of the ranch (e.g. no chores to do). The mentorship program involves two lessons (groundwork and/or riding) per day and auditing any training sessions and riding lessons for the rest of the day. Mentees work with both Falling Star Ranch horses and outside training horses to improve their

horsemanship skills both on the ground and in the saddle. Mentees are also welcome (and encouraged!) to use the Falling Star Ranch training video/DVD library for studying purposes.

This is a unique program for students not only wanting to improve and accelerate their horsemanship skills on the ground and in the saddle, but also for those looking to achieve certification in the Chris Irwin methodology. As of January 2011, Chris Irwin only accepts uncertified trainers into his Train-the-Trainer program if they have attended a minimum of two private or semi-private lessons with Chris Irwin, OR have attended two clinic days with Chris Irwin, OR have trained with a Chris Irwin certified double silver or gold trainer AND received a letter recommending the student is ready for evaluation in the Train the Trainer program.

For more information on the Falling Star Ranch mentorship program or to read testimonials from mentees, visit <http://www.fallingstarranch.ca/MentorshipPage.htm>.

Accepting Bookings for Training Horses for Spring

Birgit is now accepting bookings for training horses for spring. Do you have a horse that needs to be started under saddle? A horse that needs a refresher? Do you have a problem with a horse that you don't know how to deal with? Do you want to have some trail miles put on your mount? Or would you like to advance your horse's training? Contact Birgit for more information and to discuss your and your horse's needs. We only accept a limited number of horses per month, so book your spot early to avoid disappointment! Discounts are available for multiple (three or more) horses or for horses in training for more than three months.

Accepting New Riding Students for Spring

Birgit has room in her lesson program for new students starting in mid-April. Email or call Birgit for more information. Birgit also teaches lessons and offers coaching off property, provided there is a safe place to teach and work horses at the client's place. Please inquire for mileage.

Working Student Programs at Falling Star Ranch

Working students are an integral and valued part of the Falling Star Ranch team, and we wouldn't be able to do what we do without them. This year we hosted several working students, who came mostly from Germany, as well as one from Switzerland.



Annie (left) and Lana (right) have spent three summers at Falling Star Ranch and will return for a fourth stay next year.

Two of our working students returned for their third stay at Falling Star Ranch this year and have already committed to be back for a fourth stay in 2012. We very much appreciate these returnees, as they are not only familiar with our operation, but have become friends of the family.



Lana riding Sam and Birgit riding EA Shades of Fire

We would like to congratulate Louisa from Germany on achieving her bronze level certification in both groundwork and riding from world-renowned horse trainer, coach and clinician Chris Irwin. A job well done!



Louisa riding EA Shades of Fire

So far five working students have received certification from Chris Irwin after a stay at Falling Star Ranch.



Louisa riding Sam

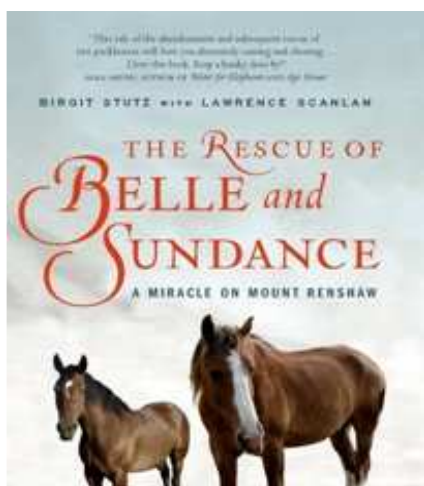
For more information on our working student program, visit <http://www.fallingstarranch.ca/VolunteerPage.htm>. Limited spots for 2012! Apply soon!



Annie and Bandit

“The Rescue of Belle and Sundance – A Miracle on Mount Renshaw”

By Birgit Stutz with Lawrence Scanlan
Published by HarperCollins Canada



The paperback version of “The Rescue of Belle and Sundance – A Miracle on Mount Renshaw” is now available and retails for \$14.99 plus tax. The hardcover version is still available as well and retails for \$24.99,

A great Christmas gift!

Visit your local bookstore or order your copy online through Chapters or Amazon. **If you would like a signed copy, please contact Birgit directly.**

Life during the Winter Months

Even though the horses enjoy some much deserved time off during the winter months (besides the occasional trail ride or groundwork session), life at Falling Star Ranch isn't exactly boring during the winter months. Between chores, keeping the wood stove going and keeping the snow at bay, Birgit is busy trying to catch up on all the things she didn't have time for between spring and fall. Birgit's plans for this winter are working on a brochure to further promote Falling Star Ranch's mentorship program, updating the Falling Star Ranch website, writing more blog entries (see link below), and editing some video footage that we've taped over the last few months and post them on YouTube and Facebook.



Practising the bow with Fire

If you're a Facebook user, Birgit is also a regular contributor to the Facebook group *What is Responsible Riding* (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/148209998557521/>), where she posts horse training tips and gives advice to other members of that group.



We hope you enjoy our newsletter. Any comments, suggestions and/or criticism are greatly appreciated.

If you have an interesting, funny or sad story involving horses or a picture of you with a horse/s that you would like to share, we would be happy to put it in our newsletter. Do you have a great horsey tip that makes life easier? Please let us know so we can share it with the other readers of this newsletter.

Falling Star Ranch Gift Store

Falling Star Ranch has t-shirts and baseball caps with the Falling Star Ranch logo for sale. For more information please check out the Falling Star Ranch website at www.fallingstarranch.ca/GiftStorePage.htm or contact Birgit by phone or email.

You can now read **PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF FALLING STAR RANCH NEWSLETTERS** on our website at <http://www.fallingstarranch.ca/NewsletterPage.htm>.

READ THE FALLING STAR RANCH BLOG AT <http://fallingstarranch.wordpress.com/>

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