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Horse Chiropractor Makes Ranch Calls

By Cathy Tyson



Dr. Christopher Tucker works on Trouble at KNV Stables with owner/trainer Leesha Davis Photo Cathy Tyson

"They're just like people, they get out of whack," said owner/trainer of "Trouble" Leesha Davis. "He just didn't want to move - I could feel his shoulder just wasn't right." Six-year old American Paint horse Trouble was a bit out of whack. Hopefully equine chiropractor Dr. Christopher Tucker can set him straight.

On a recent sunny morning, Tucker, a Lafayette chiropractor who usually works on humans, made a stable-call to get Trouble back in alignment. Because this was his initial visit, he wanted to keep it simple and build some rapport with the horse. Trouble's neck, shoulders/withers, spine and sacrum - posterior to the right - were adjusted during the course of his visit. Armed with carrots, blocks to stand on and no fear of this four-legged fellow, Tucker noted they are fairly similar to humans; although obviously more pressure is needed to tweak a 1,200 pound horse than a human patient.

Paint horses are bred for power and speed, which can cause back issues, said Davis. After working for 25 years with horses, she should know. The stallion was purchased as a rodeo barrel racing horse and has the potential to be a real winner - easy to see with his muscular frame, although she doesn't want to put him in a show with his current health issues.

Considering the difference between a first and second place finish in barrel racing can be 1/1,000 of a second, a chiropractor visit is enough to make a

difference. Davis feels it's an investment that could be worth a \$20,000 first place finish versus \$2,000 for second. Because of their obvious bond, she also wants Trouble around for a long and healthy life.

No stranger to health issues herself, Leesha Davis was on the diving team at Sierra College when she broke her neck on the diving board last year and was paralyzed from the neck down. "She's lucky to be alive, with an injury to her C-3 vertebra, if it was a C-1 or C-2 she wouldn't be here," opined Tucker. She attributes her amazing recovery to "stubborn cowgirl syndrome." She hit the board while rotating backward - basically a head on collision.

At one point Dr Tucker asked the trainer/owner Davis for help with the adjusting the withers, as he needed her for stabilization of the surrounding bones. "You only want to move the one that's stuck," said Tucker. "The vertebrae that's stuck, almost always have associated pressure points that are very tender to the touch in the surrounding region."

Since Tucker's visit, Trouble seems more easy going, laid back, according to Davis. The bucking behavior she had seen for the last five months has stopped. Although Trouble has no official comment, Davis thinks he's happier.

After being in practice for eleven years, Tucker decided he wanted to branch out to work on horses. To that end he took an additional six months of training at a specialized animal chiropractic school in Wellsville, Kansas, which included the study and adjusting of cats, dogs and horses.

When not making ranch calls, Dr. Tucker can be found at Lamorinda Chiropractic 978 Second Street, Lafayette or at equinechiro@gmail.com.

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