

## Winter 2011

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## *Caledon Dressage AGM Review*

A year of training, showing, polishing boots, tack and hundreds of other details too numerous to mention culminated in a enjoyable annual general meeting at the Globe Restaurant in Rosemont. The event was well attended and was a chance to get to know fellow competitors outside of the ring. The 'business' part of the meeting reviewed the financial statements of the club. We are well positioned for the coming year after putting on three well attended silver and one gold show. The 2012 Board of Directors continues largely unchanged (see page 29). Aimee Coslovich volunteered to replace Carey Domb who has relinquished the task of sponsorship. Carey did a fabulous job last year including the mega-coup of attracting platinum sponsors,

DTZ Barnike and HSBC for the Pan Am selection trials. Lauren Sagan takes over the responsibility for Secretary and Caledon Ontario Association, Inc. representative. Thank you new board members! Our club is always appreciative of our existing sponsors and welcomes new ones as well. This issue spotlights one of Caledon Dressage's most loyal supporters, Equestrian Factory Outlet (see page 6). Monica Fera was the proud recipient of the annual 'EFO Cup' which included a generous gift certificate redeemable at any of the Equestrian Factory Outlets.

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## *Equi-Bow: An Equine Bodywork Technique*



More and more people are becoming aware of the term 'Bowen Therapy' for humans but are less familiar with the term 'Equi-Bow' for horses. Equi-Bow Canada was formed by equine specialists Cheryl Gibson and Simone

Usselman-Tod in 2004. Then, as now, their goal was to teach a bowen-based technique that was blended with the results of decades of training and experience in a variety of traditional and complementary healing arts. This system has evolved into a totally different type of holistic approach that is uniquely suited to horses.

### **What does the technique look like?**

'Equi-Bow' describes a protocol of gentle, non-invasive touch that engages a horse's nervous system to trigger change.

*Continued on Page 3*

### **2012 To Do List:**

- ✓ Submit ideas for the next newsletter
- ✓ Buy winter boots
- ✓ Join / Renew your membership with Caledon Dressage and Caledon Ontario
- ✓ Enjoy the journey
- ✓ Support our sponsors

## Equi-Bow: An Equine Bodywork Technique - from Cover Page

It consists of a series of specific hands-on soft-tissue techniques that anyone can learn. Relying on subtle shifts in a horse's body language to determine the sequence of specific yet very light touches, the technique results in improvements that may be unavailable through other types of body work. The horse is always in charge of the process. The session is all about the horse. Horses often appear deeply relaxed and at ease during and after treatment. One can usually feel increasing warmth, as well as changes in tissue tension. Equi-Bow has proven itself to be a powerful tool for generating results and helping to eliminate problems in standardbred, thoroughbred racehorses, jumpers, hunters, dressage horses, western and trail horses and combined driving horses.

### How does it work?

Equi-Bow works primarily by engaging the nervous system in such a way as to reset connections throughout the entire system which helps to facilitate healing of the whole body. Patterns of pain and physiological dysfunctions are addressed by the horse's own nervous system which in turn affects the muscles, soft tissue and skeletal posture. Many 'conformational faults' are really 'postural compensations' by the horse. ( See *Photo 1* and *Photo 2* ). With the lightest of touches, fascia rehydrates, misalignments often correct themselves, injuries tend to resolve more quickly, blood and lymph flow are optimized, scar tissue softens, nervousness and behavioral issues generally diminish. Time is then given (after a few series ) of gentle touches for the horse's nervous system to process and feed impulses which allows the body to restore its own natural balance. Benefits are usually apparent within two to three sessions, even when long-standing conditions haven't responded to other types of treatments. Results can be long lasting and profound.

When restrictions and misalignments of the muscle fascia, tissue and skeleton are released, performance is optimized. The changes in this chestnut mare (see *Photo 2* - After: 4:00 p.m.) indicate that a release of fascia and muscle tension can quickly result in changes of : posture (often mistaken for poor conformation), rehydration of soft tissue (in this case .

the muscles have plumped up and even the hair takes on a different texture and appearance.) and fluidity of movement. "It is hard to imagine how a horse's life could be changed in just a few hours".



*Photo 1* Before: 11:46 a.m.



*Photo 2* After: 4:00 p.m.

Observations of physical signs (relaxation, hives, sweating patterns, plumping of muscles, and postural changes) indicate that physiological changes are occurring in the horse's body. Behaviors such as yawning, chewing, slowing of respiration, blowing through nose, closing of the eyes and relaxation of ears all seem to indicate the body's nervous system is transitioning from sympathetic (fight/flight) state towards a parasympathetic (rest/digest) state.



*Continued Page 4*

# Equi-Bow: An Equine Bodywork Technique - from Page 3

## Thermography: A Visual Tool

Recently Equi-Bow Canada partnered with Equine Wellness Canada Ltd in a thermography study to see if and where Equi-Bow changed the temperature of the body. Thermography records heat from infra red waves emitted from the surface of the horse, detecting temperature differences of as little as one tenth of a degree. The temperature variations recorded from the surface of the horse are converted into colored images visible by the human eye. In this example of a horse taken from above (*Image 1*), the mane and tail of the horse are primarily purple and blue, indicating areas of cooler temperatures. The areas of yellow and red down the spine indicates an area of higher body temperature.

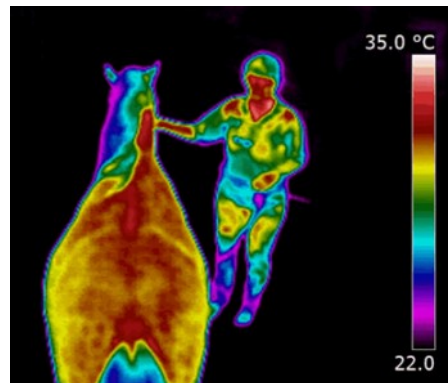


Image 1

**Recent Equi-Bow Case:** Here is a brief sample of what we saw pre and post Equi-Bow therapy. *Image 2* shows the temperature of the body in a resting state. The areas of yellow and green show a lower body temperature than the areas in red.

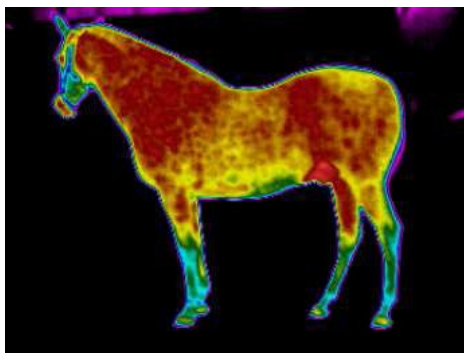


Image 2

*Image 3*, taken immediately post Equi-Bow, we see a greater degree of red and less blue and green, indicating there has been an increase in circulation and body temperature in those areas.

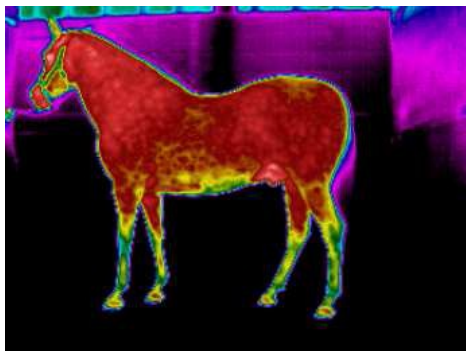


Image 3

*Image 4* is a thermograph of the chest before Equi-Bow.

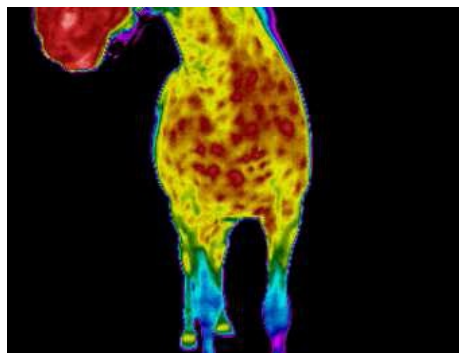


Image 4

*Image 5* is one hour after the Equi-Bow Treatment. Notice the dramatic change in circulation as indicated by the red hue.

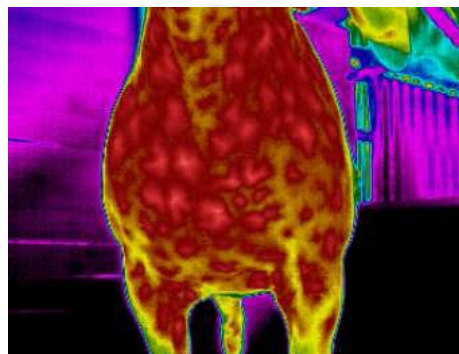


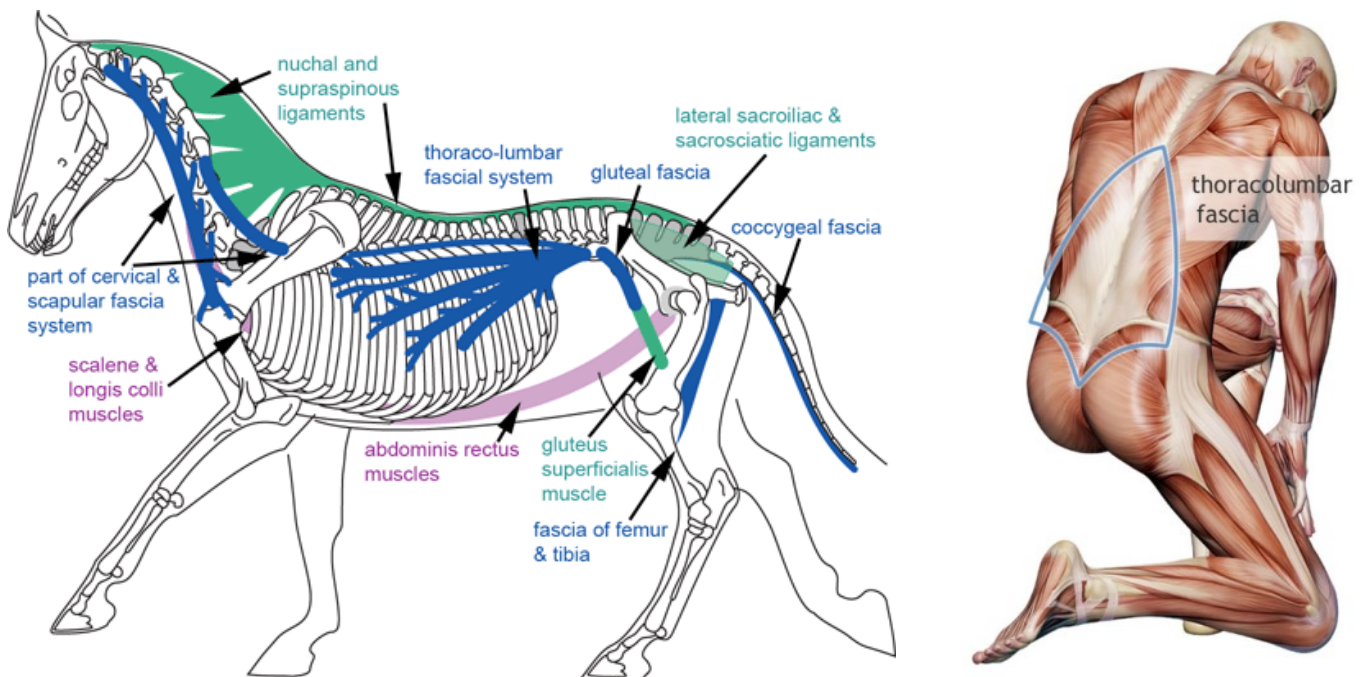
Image 5

Continued Page 5

## *Equi-Bow: An Equine Bodywork Technique* - from Page 4

### Terms and Definitions:

**Fascia:** A fascia (fasciae plural) is a connective tissue that surrounds muscles, groups of muscles, blood vessels, and nerves, binding those structures together in much the same manner as plastic wrap can be used to hold the contents of sandwiches together. The function of muscle fasciae is to reduce friction to minimize the reduction of muscular force due to friction. In doing so, fasciae allow muscles to glide over each other.



**The Nervous System:** The nervous system is an organ system containing a network of specialized cells called neurons that coordinate the actions of an animal and transmit signals between different parts of its body. In most animals, the nervous system consists of two parts: central and peripheral. The **central nervous system** of vertebrates (such as humans and horses) contains the brain, spinal cord, and retina. The **peripheral nervous system** governs the nerves that are located outside (or peripheral) to the central nervous system. The **autonomic nervous system** (a part of the peripheral system) consists of the **sympathetic** (response to stress) and **parasympathetic system** (relaxed state, resting, sleeping, digesting). The autonomic nervous system controls involuntary systems such as circulatory and respiratory systems. Activation of the parasympathetic system can be by various physical stimuli (such as **Equi-Bow technique**) impinging on them which helps relax them which can increase blood flow leading to a healthier immune system and healing.

‘Equi-Bow therapy appears to be a positive complimentary therapy for a variety of musculoskeletal conditions (i.e.: osteoarthritis/hip dysplasia) in dogs and horses under both acute and chronic circumstances’ **K.H.Bentley, D.V.M., R.Hom Guelph, ON**

‘It is incredible how good my horse looks! Her conformation has totally changed and she is doing work at 18 that she couldn’t do at 10! The lymphangitis in my horse’s leg is down by half since your last visit!’ **A.Dean, Mississauga, ON**

For more information please contact :  
**info@equi-bowcanada.com** or visit their website at  
**www.equi-bowcanada.com**  
to find Equi-Bow graduates skilled in working with horses.

This article and photos/images were kindly provided by  
Cheryl Gibson, Equi-Bow Canada.  
Illustrations on fascia courtesy of Google.