

Diary of a Day at a Clinic...

By Barbara Hoopes, winner of the SEDA scholarship for adults

ANTICIPATION: I have won the Adult Scholarship for a clinic from SEDA. Yea! But, then I learn I must write an article about my experience. Ick! Guess it's only fair, but now I have a lap top and I can't type worth a --- What price for fame.

As the day approaches I am asked if I am nervous. Of course not—I love lessons!

DAY 1: Whoops! I should have been nervous because I am lazy and Loma worked me hard (at least for my standards). What an experience, though. I have never had a lesson of any kind (jumping or saddle seat) with a person of such knowledge. I knew I had to get to the computer to record a fraction of what she had to say. Where to begin?

Forward—I had no idea. I thought I was back at the races. Not really ... since I have no idea how a racehorse moves. But, we kept at it and I think we finally got it—at least Godiva did. Then, on the bit, more, a little more—super. Light with your hands—use your fingers and wrists, not your forearm. More forward—Yes! Keep your contact on the outside rein with your ring finger. Lightly. Now a 12 meter circle



Barbara Hoopes on Godiva in the fog at Amen Corner.

(what's that?, I think) Keep up your pace, heels down—Yes! Finally, a walk and I, of course, think it's break time—but no. Walk is a gait, too and one to work on—more forward. Use your legs separately. Keep her forward—yes! Now trot but don't lose your contact and forward.

Checking my watch I think it must be the end of my lesson, but no—time to work on the canter. I am exhausted just thinking about it.

Let's see if I can remember even a part of this. Extended trot into the canter—I thought 'we need to slow down for this'. Ok, let's get this. Inside seat bone and outside leg. Boy, will my jumper enjoy this! Oh, now I have to what?—follow the movement. Sure....lift the rib cage and move the seat forward (TMI). Once in awhile, I think I hear a 'super' ... but maybe it was my imagination. Godiva has picked this up and tries to read my mind (easier that way). Forward in the canter, too. I hate that word!

Actually, truth be told, it was a wonderful day and lots of fun (work too). Loma is so positive that she keeps me going. Tomorrow is a new day and I will survive. I actually got a couple of nice words from Lynn and Tony. That is quite the compliment!

DAY 2: I think I might be able to make it through this lesson because I am sharing it with Corinne Morrison and LeDon. Maybe more breaks! ...Here we go!

Warming up and once again I'm not forward enough, but this time I am armed with spurs (baby spurs, but spurs,

nonetheless). So, on we go...more forward but we need more collection (and I thought I was getting it!). But, I am encouraged by a friendly look from Corinne. Now, it turns out she needs to go more forward, too. But LeDon loves Godiva, so if I am in front he gets going AND Godiva is getting it. In fact, I think she is doing better at this than I am. Oh well, we all need a partner.

So, on we go into the canter which is better than yesterday (I think). But no 'supers' ... or maybe I am too pooped to hear it.

The right bend gives us trouble so, naturally, we work on that. And who ever said 'Dressage Queens'?—queens don't work this hard and I should know! But Godiva is great and all I have to do is sit—yes, a sitting trot. I'm not sure which I am worse at—sitting trot or sitting canter! Have they never heard of two point?

Finally, I think the lesson is finished and Corinne (my friend?) wants to do leg yields—are you kidding? All I have to do is follow LeDon—not so simple as it sounds. Oh well, there's always next time. And poor Leslie will have to put up with me till Loma comes again.

So, now that I have all this in my mind, I will go to a jumping show in a week and see how my jumper, Luna likes it. She also reads my mind.

REFLECTION: Thanks for letting me be the adult scholarship winner this time. I encourage everyone to apply. Eventually, you will be chosen—this was my second try and boy, is it worth it! I had a real respect for dressage riders before, and now I am in awe of all of you.

I love SEDA and all of its members. Everyone is so nice and fun and I love to come to the shows, too. ♣