

Walter Zettl in Michigan

The McPhail Equine Performance Center in East Lansing, MI, brought Walter Zettl to the Midwest on the weekend of November 6-8, 2009. Riding slots were in high demand and filled quickly. Auditors were welcome, and several folks from around the region came to observe and learn from this Master of Dressage.

Zettl's approach to dressage training is based on deep psychological understanding of the equine partner. This is made clear in his writings and in his teaching. Zettl makes the notion of harmonious relationship between horse and rider to be the central thesis of his riding theory. He rules out any approach that uses forceful methods and

keeps reminding his readers that the only way to successful riding lies in a relationship which is built upon trust between horse and rider.

The author of two popular books, "Dressage in Harmony: From Basic to Grand Prix" (1998), and "The Circle of Trust" (2008), Mr. Zettl is one of the world's most accomplished and revered masters of classical dressage, and is a much-sought-after clinician and coach.

Quotes from Mr. Zettl:

"The goal of all dressage riding should be to bring the horse and rider together in harmony...a oneness of balance, purpose, and athletic expression."

"Trust and respect are two-way streets. We want the horse to accept us as leaders of the herd, to guide them safely and to provide protection and comfort. In return, they will give us their respect, and willing submission to our ideas about what to do next, and when and where. But this respect can only be based on well deserved trust."

"At each stage of work the horse must be taken to his limit, but never over."

"When you have had a good ride one day, it is wonderful, but it is also very dangerous."



Several EIDEA members attended the Walter Zettl clinic at Michigan State University in November. Hannah Ferguson, Lynn Birkland, [Mr. Zettl], Lois Pienkos, Jan Vlasak and Hilary Nektivinda.