



OVER HERD

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Would this Dream come true?

By Joanie Benson

February 2010

Most of you know that I love all horses, but I admit to having an extra soft spot in my heart for Tennessee Walkers. I feel a tremendous sympathy for all that they endure: the show training, the use of “sore-ing”, huge high pads and heavy shoes that can often cause early arthritis and tendon issues. If they do well in the show ring, their value increases and they are then relegated to continuous breeding. Even if they do not do well in the show ring, the mares often become baby factories as Tennessee Walking horses are a comfortable riding breed and there is typically a demand for them as pleasure or trail horses. Despite such difficult experiences, these horses continue to have a trusting soul. They are generally very intelligent.

A woman took in a number of horses from a person who was not caring for them. All went well for a time, and then the slowing economy made it difficult for this woman to care for all of her horses. Veterinarian visits had to be cut back to emergencies only, lower quality (less expensive)

feed was purchased and the owner was doing the best that she could. All of the horses had adjusted to these changes and were doing okay – except for one 24-year-old mare.



Dream Dancer

Sometimes people think that things will improve if the horse is given more hay or a little more feed. Seldom does this work. Often I think, the owners are not really looking at the horse realistically and cannot face how bad things have become. It generally takes someone else to make them take a close look at the skinny body that is wasting away. It takes a huge concerted effort to turn around a horse that has dropped to a Body Score of a low “1”.

Dream Dancer was so very weak! She loved her hay and put her head in the hay feeder for her whole first day at the sanctuary. She came out only long enough to eat her ration of grain and soaked alfalfa. She was looking stronger in just a few days! But because she was in such poor condition and we were enduring a brutal stretch of frigid weather, we felt it was too cold to have her outside even when the sun was out. Dream was content with being in a stall, just eating and eating and then eating some more. She was also enjoying the attention from the volunteers including a very light brushing with a very soft brush. After all, she was still skin and bones.

Just when we thought all was going well and Dream was on her way to health, she went down in her stall during the night and could not get back up on her own. Deborah, Joanne and I tried to

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(Continued from above, Dream)

help her up – without success. I ran in and called our vets and then called my wonderful neighbor, Perry Morgan. Perry dropped everything and came right over with his Bobcat. We had been able to



get her out of the stall, but she could not stand. We worked two straps under her belly, one in the front and one in the back. Regrettably, Deborah and I have had to do this before but experience taught us how to work quickly. Perry and his machine lifted her; we put on another, better sling with straps that went under her tail and across her chest. Once she was upright in the sling, it

took awhile until she was comfortable enough to put her full weight on her hooves. Dr. Jonathan Featherstone arrived and checked her over from end to end. We had blood drawn for a panel and put a blanket on her. She got a dose of Bute (like aspirin for horses) for the knocking around she had done to herself.



Several days later, Dream went down again, only this time there was no getting her up. She could not get her back legs under her and had little control of them. This confirmed my worst fears! She had EPM, a neurological disorder that, among other things, causes weakness in the hind end. Her past owners had been feeding her “sweet feed”, and so often it is contaminated with the protozoa from opossums that causes this dreaded illness. We were heartbroken, for we all knew what had to be done.

We stayed with Dream Dancer as she quietly crossed the Rainbow Bridge, letting her go to a place where she would no longer feel pain or hunger.



Saving a Life by Asking for Help by Joanie Benson

FORECLOSURE. What a horrible word. It sends chills down homeowners' spines. (I pray for all those who have been hit so hard during this economic downturn.) All too often, credit cards are maxed out trying to hold things together, compounding the financial struggle.

Not long ago, life seemed perfect with your dogs and your two beloved horses, and almost before you knew it, things fell apart. You find it impossible to find a place you can afford to rent and keep your precious animals. They rely on you; all you have is each other. If you are not too particular about where you live, you maybe able to keep your dogs. You have tried and tried, but no one will take your two Thoroughbreds that you have even offered for free. Then as a last resort, contact is made with HPS and you pray they will take your two horses in.

I tried to tell this nice gal that life was not over and it could become a time of freedom from responsibilities, a time when she could really decide what is of highest importance, an opportunity to redesign her life. We agreed that HPS would take in her horses.

A few days later a much different-sounding gal called and said, "The horses are really important to me and I have contacted the stable where I boarded them years ago. They have room for them." I expressed happiness for her and wished her well.

Several months went by, and lo and behold — I hear from this nice gal again. She said that one horse was doing fine but her Thoroughbred mare was losing weight; she was very concerned for her. We agreed to take her in.

Everyone at the sanctuary was enjoying having a horse that was not a bag of bones but simply about 100 pounds too light. "Cinder" was putting weight on and seemed to have adjusted well.

One day as Cinder was just coming into her stall, she had a small slip. Blood was streaming from an area where there was an old scar and proud flesh, on her rear pastern and fetlock joint. Deborah figured this probably meant a call to the vet. The mare had lost a good deal of blood but it began slowing and freezing. We could have doctored the area and bandaged her up, but the correct treatment was to have the old proud flesh removed.

Dr. Jonathan Featherstone spent several hours cleaning up the old wound and used four stitches and 30 staples to close the area. He will be returning to rewrap the leg four times over the next few weeks. We are



hopeful for a full recovery as well as improvement in her use of her back leg. We had previously noticed a slight weakness that may have been from the poor healing of the old injury. Wounds will usually heal better if they are stitched rather than just letting them heal by themselves. Since it is important to keep the bandaging dry, she and her buddy, Noble, have to be kept in the aiseways of the barn during rainy days and nights. Cinder is only about 18 years old and we hope she will one day make someone a wonderful sweet riding horse.

And so, a horse that needed just a few pounds turned into a *major* vet bill! But for our new girl to have a chance at being sound in the future, it was well worth it. I think that's why she came to us in the first place.

Thank you so very much for caring about the rescued horses. They need, and deserve, the best after what they have been through. **Cinder could use an Angel Sponsor—will it be you?**

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE HORSES

There are many ways that each of us can help these beautiful and loving creatures. Donations are always needed: become an Angel Sponsor (see January 2010 newsletter for details), honor a friend or loved one, memorialize a human or non-human. Here are a few other ways to get involved:

- ◇ **Become a feeder!** There are **45** horses that like to eat, and we are in need of more helping hands! There is always an experienced Main Feeder and at least one helper on the property, so you would not be doing this important chore alone. Our greatest need for help is during the Morning and Weekend Feeds. Morning feeding starts around 7 and usually lasts until noon. (Evening feeds start around 4:30 and last until about 8.) If you can make time any morning or weekend, feel the satisfaction of caring for these loving horses. Please come out and help. Contact Katie Muir 508-527-4314 for more information.



- ◇ **Purchase Food Lion grocery cards from HPS.** Although Food Lion has changed its MVP policy and will no longer help any animal causes, we can still get a 5% contribution from them for the purchase of grocery cards. The MVP change is a great loss to us as we have normally received about \$1,200 annually from it. We will be looking for new ways to replace the lost funds.



- ◇ **Keep Those Aluminum Beverage Cans Rolling!** Many thanks to our wonderful members who continue to collect and transport aluminum beverage cans to the Can City holding area at the ranch. This is one of our ongoing fundraisers. Every bit helps and is put to good use on the horses' behalf. Your efforts matter and are appreciated! Let's maximize our opportunities to collect cans...put a bag in your breakroom at work...ask your family, friends, and neighbors for help.



Please note that this is for aluminum beverage cans ONLY.

In Calendar Year **2009**, the ranch made **\$ 676** on the cans, making your time and trouble of supporting this very worthwhile for the horses. If our four-footed friends could speak, they would say, "Thank you for caring about us enough to help!"

And if you're out of the area but can recycle locally, see what you can raise through a similar program where you live. Let's set a goal to double last year's total. We've got a good start with \$88 in less than a full month!

- ◇ **Participate in our Spring Tack Sale Fundraiser.** The weekend of May 1 and 2 has been designated for the HPS fundraiser tack sale. You can participate by bringing us your unwanted saddles, bridles, halters, pads, stirrups—well, any tack that you no longer need or want. HPS will first check to see if it can be used at the sanctuary for the riding program, to ready our horses for Forever Homes. Anything that can't be used will be cleaned and put up for sale in May. Simply include your name, address and email address along with a listing of your donated items when you drop off the items at the ranch. We need to make this a HUGE fundraising success, so be sure to mark your calendar and tell your friends. THANK YOU!!!



Honors and Memorials

Belated Holiday and New Year Greetings:

To honor the Troy Seymour Family at Christmas,
by Dianne Doub

*In honor of our Gamma, Julia Bemis. Thank you for teaching us to
love and care for our animals and those less fortunate.*

*Happy New Year.
Love, Sam & Juju*

A Christmas present to honor Betty Lentz,
by Floyd Lentz

*Merry Christmas, Aunt Katie Simmons,
by Ashi Guglielmo*

In honor of Lisa Sherman and Tony England, Happy New Year! By
Susan Sherman

In honor of
Lt. Hamby
of the Yadkin
County
Sheriff's Office,
who serves with
Heart!
By Dianne Doub

A huge "Thank You" to
Jane Oglesby's class at
Coddle Creek Elementary
School for the fundraiser
selling "Reindeer Munch."

In honor of Jeff Pettit, by Briana L. Pettit

In honor of Susie Lurz on her birthday,
by Mel & Flo Kostur

*In honor of Jay & Jessica Griffin,
by Dr. & Mrs. J. L. Griffin*

In honor of Betty Lentz, by Kim Clark

In honor of Katie Muir, by Lois Brandt

In honor of Austin, Lyndci and Camryn Hut, by Katherine Wood

*In honor of my friend, Nicky, on her
birthday, by Pam Duncan*

In honor of my wife, Alice, who loves horses, by Robert Bischoff

In loving memory of Erin Latz's Rare Cinnabar "Red", who was laid
to rest on November 28, 2009.
by Jill Tweedy.

*In memory of my beloved cats, "Delphie" and "Chumsie",
by Sara Lewis*

Remembering little Snickers,
Angel's dear friend, who died in January 2002,
by Roberta McCardle

In memory of Kristen Hinds,
by her parents.

*In memory of Allan Pletcher, Melissa
Pletcher's brother, by Lisa Muse*

In memory of Edgar Nelson O'Neal, by
Sharon & Jerry Smith

*In loving memory of Evelyn J. Young, by
Sharon & Jerry Smith*

In memory of Jan Smith, by Carol Neill

*In memory of Jan Euster Smith, by Mr. &
Mrs. Hubert Kimry*

In memory of Summi, Serdi and John
Adam, by Mary Myers

*Happy Birthday, Margie.
Love, your "Nah Nah Sisters"*

Happy Birthday to Holly Robbins!

*In honor of Joanie Benson and all
the "HELPERS" for saving and re-
storing health to so many needy
horses.*

By Marilyn B. Swimmer

In honor of Diane Jackson,
by Anonymous

Donation From: _____ Phone# _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Email address _____
 Please use my donation for: \$ _____ New Barn Fund \$ _____ General Use
Angel Sponsor: \$20 for 1 month \$60 for 3 months \$120 for 6 months \$240 for 1 year
 Whom would you like to receive your Honor, Memorial, or Angel Sponsor (please circle)? Name: _____
 Phone _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email address _____ Would you like the above recipient to receive "Over Herd" - **Yes No**
 Your message for the newsletter:

****Any donation is appreciated. Please make your check payable to Horse Protection Society.
 For a \$25 or more donation, the named person can receive "Over Herd" for 1 year.

Mail completed form to:
 Horse Protection Society, 2135 Miller Road, China Grove, NC 28023

Monthly Donations & Contributors

Huge **Valentines** go to our generous contributors, without whose financial support we would simply cease to operate. And apologies to those whose donations were meant for the holiday season — with our shortened deadlines, we were already to press before your envelopes were opened. THANK YOU and may the Lord bless you.

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