



Tacoma January 2012

## Tacoma Returns

By Joanie Benson

It is always sad when a horse returns to the sanctuary. Tacoma is a wonderful healthy young horse ready to be trained for any discipline. He is like any young horse and has to be treated with a kind yet firm hand when he acts up, testing people. Almost all horses will test their new caregivers to see if they or the horse is in charge.

Young girls are often the worst in not understanding how horses think and respond to handling. We can tell them and tell them and they can say, "Yes, I understand." But when it comes time to give the correct response to poor behavior from a horse testing them, they have difficulty following through to correct the horse. This is when the behavior deteriorates even more over time until the horse can become dangerous; improper or lack of correction tells the horse to do as he/she pleases regardless of the human.

In the horses' life someone has to be in charge for the horse to feel safe. If that is not the person, then the horse takes over and decides what it wants to do rather than looking to the person for direction. Way too many people say they understand this relationship, but in fact do not understand how it is established between a person and a horse. By making a horse behave, it will feel safe with you. Allowing unwanted behavior puts the horse in charge.

Sometimes it starts with simple little things that people overlook. This is a mistake and may start you on a road to bad actions escalating. When a horse rubs his face on you to scratch, this is a disrespectful action. You are not a fence post nor should your horse treat you that way. Pushing the horse's head away with a sharp "No" lets the horse know he is not allowed into your space without permission. If a horse bumps you hard in the back for attention, this is another time to correct the horse. It is often the little things that are not corrected that lead to bigger (and more dangerous) issues quickly.

When leading a horse, the person should always be in front, not at the shoulder of the horse. If the horse charges forward, then a short whip should be carried low and raised when the horse starts to move forward too much. Turning the horse in a way that puts you back in front also establishes leadership over the horse. These are small things that should be done from the very beginning with a horse.

Some horses will turn their back end towards the person who goes into the stall to put on a halter and lead rope. This is dangerous behavior, for at any moment the horse may decide to kick you. This also shows a total lack of respect for the person. It is not the horse's fault, but rather the fault of the person for allowing the behavior to degenerate to this point.

It saddens me when people do not call HPS for help when an issue first shows itself. Too often, they wait until they are afraid the horse will hurt someone and, therefore, feel the need to send the horse back to HPS. We would always rather be given the opportunity to see if we can help a situation instead of simply taking back a horse. It is better for the person, for the horse and for the sanctuary.

## Updates at HPS

By Joanie Benson

**Eleven horses** thus far have gotten their dental work done. These are the horses that have been returned from placements or are new to the sanctuary this year. It is better to have this work done while the weather is cool rather than wait until summer when it is hot. In February, we will do another group of the horses. Some of the horses may just need to be checked and not require that any work be done.... I hope! Giving the drugs needed to quiet the horse for the procedure is hard on the horse in hot weather.

**Rabies vaccines** have been given to every horse at the sanctuary. We separate vaccines rather than give them all at one time. It's hard enough on horses to receive multiple vaccinations, and even tougher on horses that have been through what ours have endured.

**Wind Star** taught us a great deal -- the EPM medication worked and greatly reduced the infestation. The problem was a secondary condition that was causing a compression of her spinal cord, and it was getting worse. Her EPM was cured but we still had to let her pass on due to the spinal issues.

**Cherub's** blood test has been returned and she is high positive for EPM which is no surprise to anyone helping here at the ranch. We will do one more blood test and then start her on the same medication we used for Wind Star.

**Alamo and Sage** went off to their new home. Alamo did not want to get on the trailer, so we had the vet come and give some drugs to help him relax. We see this with some of the horses; they just do not want to leave HPS and their friends. We are getting wonderful reports from their new family.

### Need to Buy or Sell Tack?

The **Equestrian Exchange Tack Sale** held each year by Lynn Beeson & Tanya Wright will be at the Cabarrus Arena Feb. 24 -26, 2012. For information to consign items or hours of the sale, you can visit <http://equestrianexchange.com/OnlineTagging.html> If you consign items and they do not sell, please donate them to the Horse Protection Society for a tax deduction.

## War Horse

By Joanie Benson

Deborah Baker and I decided to go see the movie *War Horse*. The first problem we had to overcome was being able to leave the sanctuary. We finally got that worked out when Delia's aunt agreed to help her with the evening feeding. Then, we were apprehensive since we deal with so much horror with the horses that come to the sanctuary. One of the main reasons I wanted to see the movie was because the first horse my tiny little children had was a forty-year-old World War II horse which, of course, they named GI Joe. (Great horse, but in terrible condition when I got him!)

My tears during the film were for the horses at the sanctuary as the scenes brought so many of our babies to my mind. The movie begins with the frisky colt, Joey, so like our beautiful Autumn who is not interested in human touch, playing on the moors of Scotland. As Albert befriends the young Joey, the horse's training progresses. This reminds me of so many horses under our care as they blossom into the marvelous creatures they were always meant to be.

Later, a heartbroken Albert has to let his beloved horse become a war horse and leases him to the cavalry. In my mind, it was Sage being given up by her owner who, tragically, was too ill to continue to care for her.

The movie continues with Joey falling into the hands of the enemy, who were treating their horses horribly: over-worked, no feed or rest, no care of injuries and dying. This is a description of Cherub's life before rescue. (We have seen it all before! The muddy round pens in the film recalled very similar situations from which HPS has rescued many horses. So many horses have come to the sanctuary with untended injuries, and starved, overworked, broken bodies.)

Finally Joey escapes in a panic from his abusers, only to get tangled in barbed wire, like Sahara and Phoenix. Joey was rescued from his barbed wire imprisonment as Phoenix was also. The veterinarians thought Phoenix was septic like the movie's Joey and could not be saved. But Phoenix rose from the ashes of his terrible life to be a wonderful, sweet horse. He is now looking for a new loving home once again. Sahara still proudly bears the scars upon her legs from another life.

The end of the movie brings to mind the horses leaving HPS for homes where they will be loved and cared for. Folks in the trenches rescuing starved and abused horses understand the suffering of the horses depicted all through this movie! It is not just a movie to us, but a lens into our lives aiding the suffering horses and what we see. Some of the horses come to HPS looking as if they have been in a war zone! And yet, with grateful thanks to you, they are returned to a life of love and nurturing.

## **Feeding Schedule – New Folks – Some Rules**

By Joanie Benson

The Horse Protection Society welcomes help at the sanctuary – after all, we could not do any of our rescue and rehabilitation without help. At the same time, we have a feeding schedule prepared in advance, and ask that folks sign up to come and help, not just show up at any time. If you are unsure about making a commitment, you may come to help a couple of times, but after two such visits, you need to become a Member (simply fill out the form and pay the dues). It is important not to have too many new folks show up at one time because each new person needs to be trained in each aspect of work that has to be done. We cannot have young children running around the sanctuary; they need to be right with their parent who is to provide supervision. All children and adults need training to stay safe around the horses, and to learn the correct procedures for each thing that needs to be done. This is why we have a schedule -- it lets the Main Feeder plan the feeding and assign tasks to each person helping. *Please do not come to help without letting us know* so we can see if you are needed for that feeding time or if it is your intention to clean the barns. Morning feedings start early (we have over 45 mouths to feed!). If you are on the schedule, you need to be here by 7:30 to 7:45 a.m. at the latest – rain or shine.

It is confusing to have people arriving at all different times and interrupting the flow of the feeding and doctoring. If you wish to be a feeder, you need to be a Member and ask to be on the feeders' list. This ensures that you receive updates, know what is going on and get a copy of the feeding schedule to see open dates. We take this work very seriously and we need each person to take it seriously, too, to make sure everything gets done correctly. This is not playtime for the kids who come to the sanctuary. Each one is expected to learn, work, follow directions and stay with their parent. This may sound a little harsh, but things can turn into chaos easily, putting people and horses in danger. With so many horses and different care needed for each, following procedures and knowing one horse from another is extremely important. We want your help, but we also need it to be organized. Thank you!

### In Honor Of

**Susan & Mike Williams for her birthday and their anniversary** by Debra & Ken Rockett

**Merry Christmas to a wonderful mother and horse lover** by Jeannette Koch

**"Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture."** Psalm 37.3  
Danielle Donovan by Jennifer Dellinger

**Thank you Joanie and all the volunteers who care for the HPS horses** by Judith Cashwell

### MEMORIALS

In loving memory of sweet Sirius, a wonderful dog and a dear girl.  
From her friend Roberta

*In memory of Meriwether Buckalew because of her love for horses..*  
*By Marilyn & Edward Gideon, Jr.*

## **MONTHLY DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTORS**

Ed note: I was at the sanctuary yesterday, and for the first time in I can't recall how long, the Newcomers' Round Pen was vacant! This doesn't mean that the need for it is over – it is simply a welcome respite that allows the volunteers to focus more intently on the current horses and get geared up for the next abuse call for help. It may also be a reflection that our mild winter, thus far at least, has allowed horses in tough situations to use less of their own body fat to stay warm. So, dear readers, please know that your concern and donations are still very much needed and appreciated. With gratitude and thanks whose names appear here, and to those whose names are missing, we'd love the opportunity to include you next month!

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Mr. & Mrs. Bob Stickley  
Elaine D. Towner  
John Vinal  
Susan Williams  
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Jennifer L. Zirt

### **Feeding your Horse for the Winter**

By Janet G. Elmo

The single most important food source for your horse is forage – pasture and/or hay. Most experts say that horses should consume 1-1/2% to 2% of their ideal body weight daily – and at least 90% of that should be in forage. In the winter, even if you have grass, it is likely of no nutritional value as the grass goes dormant during the cold season. Free-choice hay is recommended; this means that your horse will be better off having hay available to eat at all times. Since horses are built to graze about 18 hours a day, you can see why a couple of flakes a day just won't cut it. A 1,000-lb horse would need about 15 - 20 pounds per day.

The quality of the hay is also important. It needs to be clean, dust- and mold-free, weed-free (a definite challenge to horse owners), and cut and baled while immature. Hay that is soft and leafy is preferred over hay that is stemmy and stiff. The less mature the hay, the higher the nutrient value and the more your horse can consume. Mature hay is generally less digestible and more likely to be rejected by your horse. As a horse owner, I like it when my horses eat every blade of grassy hay; not only because I'm really getting my money's worth but less waste means less cleanup for me!

Be on the lookout for nasty weeds like Foxtail. This particular "seed head" is barbed, and when eaten by horses, those barbs can get caught in their gums, under their tongues, even in their intestines. It can cause abscesses, swelling and the like, resulting in horses being unable to eat or drink, a vet visit, or - in the worst case (like one of the HPS horses) - death.

During periods of cold weather, horses use more of their energy to stay warm. You can help them by providing more hay than usual. Hay is also a natural and effective way to put weight on your horse (as long as he has the teeth to chew it). People often go to fat supplements like oil or rice bran, and these can be useful to add more calories especially if the horse has all the hay he wants and still needs more calories. And be sure the horse has access to clean water regardless of weather. Remove ice layers from water troughs; provide lukewarm or warm water if possible. The more water your horse takes in, the less of a chance there is for an impaction colic.

"Easy keepers" should also be getting nutritional support in a concentrated ration balancer; this will provide them the important amino acids, vitamins and major & trace minerals without a lot of extra calories. "Hard keepers" can receive their nutrition in a lower concentrated food since they will benefit from the additional calories. I recommend that you stay away from foods with molasses and corn – high levels of carbohydrates are not friends to equines.

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**The People's Corner**

**Health Issues**

Health Tips from  
 Joanie Benson  
 Coming to you from  
 Joanie's personal ex-  
 periences or research

Once again, studies are showing that high doses of vitamin B12 and B-complex can lower the chances of strokes and heart attacks. However, vitamin therapy is not recommended for people with kidney disease. And, do not use synthetic vitamins if you expect to get the needed benefits!

Studies have also shown that adding folic acid with the B12 promotes and improves cognitive function. B vitamins are crucial for nerve transmission and, as your stress levels increase, are needed in higher amounts.

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