



& Nickerers & Neighs

News from Volunteer Equine Advocates "Straight from the horse's mouth"

1st Dark Horse Gala a Success!

Fundraising is the way we are able to ensure that we have enough money to feed and care for the horses that have been surrendered by their owners during their court hearing. This year we put together the "Dark Horse Gala," a dinner and auction evening. The definition of a Dark Horse is "one with no hope"—but VEA (with the help of members and donors) brings hope to the hopeless.

This was our first big *fund-raising event,* and we were pleased with the support we received from the community and the county officials whom we assist. Our first Dark Horse Gala was held at *Larivierre's Restaurant* on the Square in Gallatin. It was packed with people—*nearly 100 attended*!

We had silent auction items as well as a live auction. VEA members put together and donated baskets that were given away as door prizes during the evening. We learned a lot and are already looking forward to next year's event!

Some of the silent auction items were an Italian Cooking Lesson with Sue Manor, Gift certificates to Academy Sports, books, a variety of horse supplies, and Farnam sent a gift bag with will a variety of items!.

Live Auction items included a commissioned oil portrait by Jennifer Simpkins, a table made and signed by John Garratt, a tack box on wheels donated by Lovell Equine Clinic, a pallet of horse bedding donated by Callaway Farms and many more!

The funds raised will be used to build shelters for the horses we have that are either up for adoption or waiting for a court date.

*Watch for the second Dark Horse Gala event in October 2009! 🐾



New Bond Law

The Statute for Tennessee's Animal Cruelty Law has been revised to provide for a security bond to be ordered by the court when animals are seized due to neglect or abuse. The judge can require an animal owner who has been charged to pay for the animal's care while it is being held as evidence pending trial. There are consequences for failing to post the bond. When faced with being required to pay for care, many owners choose to immediately forfeit the animals. This is good and bad. Good: There is often a speedy resolution to the question of custody of the animals, allowing them to be available for adoption more quickly. Bad: An owner who forfeits may not have to pay for any of the expenses incurred for the animal's rehabilitation. The fine and penalty for violating the state's animal cruelty law is a Class A Misdemeanor; in the past, paying for the animal's care during rehabilitation has been the bulk of the punishment.

Recent Adoptions

VEA held its 2nd Adoption Day at Emerald Isle Stables in June. Five of the featured horses were adopted into new families. Several tack items that had been donated to VEA were sold. Five of the mares from Giles County were adopted, two of these by their foster families. With winter coming, we had worried that the slowing economy would also slow adoptions, but six more horses went to live with new families in October. There are many more still waiting to find the perfect new home. Please look under [VEA HORSES AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION](#) on the website. If you can't adopt, please consider sponsorship for one of these horses.

Introducing ... Beau!

Met Beau” A beautiful 5 year old Thoroughbred brought into VEA in February of 2008 When he first came to his foster home in February, he had a body score of 1. He was literally hair and bones. He appeared small and frail. Beau has made the long road back from near starvation. Now he is an impressive looking, muscled, shiny horse. However, he had also suffered other neglect. He had an injury that had never been treated and left him with prepuccial paraphimosis. After many months of efforts to rehabilitate the injury, one failed procedure and now an operation from UT Large Animal Hospital in Knoxville, TN – He is finally seeing the green pastures at the end of this long road he has traveled.

And what interesting curves that road had, including a chance to show Beau.

Participating in the first Parelli Celebration of 2009 by providing the demo horse for Pat to “start” was an honor for Volunteer Equine

Advocates. Being able to watch Beau transform as Pat began to develop a relationship with him was heart-warming for us.

When Pat announced that he would like to be a part of the selection process for an approved adopter, we were thrilled. After Parelli Dream Horse applications were completed by over a dozen hopeful adopters, Pat did a group interview narrowing the field to four people he felt would be best suited as “partners” for Beau. The VEA board completed the interview process by having each of the final four prospects interact with Beau and discuss his future with them if selected as his new partner.

Antoinette Bush from Prospect, TN, was named Beau’s new “partner for life.” The adoption is not complete until the end of a successful probation period, but with Pat’s input and VEA’s standard adoption process we feel Beau and Ann will be sharing many happy times for



years to come. Beau is currently at the Parelli facility in Ocala, Florida for continued development and will return to Ann’s barn in Prospect in a few weeks.

There were many expenses involved with Beau’s rehabilitation, but due to his age, agreeable disposition and otherwise healthy outlook, VEA did not consider any alternative other than helping him live a happy, healthy life. If you would like to be a part of his rehabilitation by helping with Beau’s expenses, please send a check to VEA, P.O. Box 112, Gallatin, TN 37066 and specify Beau’s expenses in the description line. All donations are tax deductible. 🐾

VEA’s Most Recent Arrivals

Kansas (a spotted stallion), Ming (a white mare) and Willie (Ming’s then 4-month-old foal) were placed in the care of VEA in October and November by the authorities in Sumner County when their owners were charged with failing to provide adequate care, a violation of the Cruelty to Animals Statute.

Logan (a male donkey) and his buddies Saint and Moki (both quarter horse geldings) came to VEA in November when their owner suddenly passed away. There were no relatives in Tennessee who would



be able to take over their care. They came with their winter supply of hay and some tack to be sold to help defray the cost of caring for them until they are adopted.

NOTE: VEA encourages equine owners to accept the responsibility of ownership and plan for the care of their animals when the unexpected happens. We can only take unwanted equine as space permits—with adoptions slow, there has been very little extra space or funding for the care of unwanted equine.

VEA will consider requests but when we cannot accept the animals, we will assist owners in finding new homes by listing the animals on our website as available for Owner Transfer. We will also supply a list of websites who allow free listings for horses for sale. 🐾

Around the Corral

Congratulations, Michael! Mitchell!

December 20 was a chilly day—a far cry from the blistering dry days of Summer 2008 when Eagle Scout candidate Michael Mitchell and his team of Boy Scouts and adult leaders labored to drive fence posts at one of VEA's rehab locations. For his Eagle Scout service project, Michael planned and led his team in replacing the farm's old fences, most of which had been in place more than 40 years. The project was suggested by VEA member Prisi Selfridge, owner of Hairy Moose Pet Resort, where Michael worked part-time on weekends.

When he first surveyed the project site, it was April and the earth was soft from rain. By the time he had enough materials in hand to start, it was summer and the skies had given up on rain for the season. Michael also didn't realize how much good



ol' Tennessee limestone lay just under the soil. Through it all, he and his team persevered, until finally the bright new wire fencing shone in the sun.

His reward came on Dec. 20 when he was admitted to the exalted status of Eagle Scout at a ceremony at First Presbyterian Church in Gallatin. His brother, Daniel, who is also an Eagle Scout, presided at the ceremony. At one point the brothers shared a hug after Michael credited Daniel with inspiring him to strive to become an Eagle Scout and with keeping him motivated. Michael's mother pinned his Eagle badge on him and glowed with pride at seeing him reach the pinnacle of Scouting.

Michael is considering a career as an engineer—he's already got one project to put on his resume! Thank you Michael! 🐾

Why We Volunteer

About two years ago, my wife saw a TV news report on the rescue of a mule mired in a mud hole. The reporter interviewed some folks from a group that rescued and rehabilitated abused and neglected horses, donkeys and mules—and sometimes, we later learned, even goats. We had about 18 acres of pasture we'd neglected to bushhog in the fall, and, when the spokesperson said they needed places to foster care horses, my wife said, "That's us!"

My wife grew up around horses; I've ridden maybe three times in my life. But we share a feeling that we are stewards of our blessings and that as such, we should use them to help others. Within a couple of days of calling VEA, we greeted two very

large donkey jacks, which we promptly named Edgar and Rice Burros. A few days after that, around 8 or 9 very skinny mares showed up.

Since then we have seen maybe 30 different horses come and go. Many of them were in far worse shape than the first group, and some ultimately didn't make it. We met our first blue-eyed horse, became acquainted with a wide range of personalities and quirks in our foster "kids," and rejoiced over a deep and ever-flowing well whose pump we had replaced a few years ago while wondering if it was worth the cost.

After watching VEA volunteers knock themselves out feeding the



herd for many weeks, it occurred to me to get up off my rump and help — sorry it took so long, folks! Now, whenever I can't do it because of travel or some other reason, I miss it, can't wait to get back to it.

The experience of getting to know the people and the animals has been another one of those blessings, and I hope all of you who help, from feeding to funding, feel the same way. 🐾

Ready for a Home: Fancy

Black and White Spotted Saddle Horse Filly

A VEA volunteer, Miranda, has been working with Fancy since June 2008. When she arrived at Emerald Isles, she had several key issues that needed to be resolved.

- She was not yet at optimum weight.
- She lacked ground manners when being led, tied, or fed.
- She had no experience in the roundpen.
- She had not been broke to ride.
- She had a fear of water/hoses.

Over the seven months that Miranda has been working with her, Fancy has made improvements in all of these areas. Thanks to Kathie's feeding regiment and the extra feed she gets after exercises, Fancy has attained a healthy weight. She is polite when being led, tied and fed. In the roundpen, she respects space, responds to speed controls from voice and the whip, and joins up.

Miranda began riding Fancy in July; she takes a saddle and a bit politely, and stands still for a mounting rider. While we haven't made as

much progress with the wash rack as we'd like, Fancy will now accept a wet towel on her as a method of cleaning.

As far as riding is concerned, Fancy is thoughtful and quick to learn.



Because she's naturally curious and likes to think things through, the key to working with her is to respect her pace and make her feel involved. Before using any equipment on her (in particular saddle pads and the saddle), Miranda always bring them to her face to she can sniff and poke at them; this alleviates any nervousness she may have before being tacked up. Before teaching her anything new under saddle, Miranda works with her on the ground so she'll be

familiar with what leg pressures or certain sounds mean. Any time she begins to show a lack of confidence or tension, her trainer respond with long, solid strokes on her neck; she has found that this visibly relaxes Fancy. She also responds well to the sound of the voice and is quick to pick up on tone.

At this point, Fancy is ridden in a plain O-ring snaffle. She can walk, turn, and stop, and she's getting progressively lighter on the mouth. Currently Miranda is working on teaching her to back up and trot, which will take more time. She feels that if Fancy were adopted by an intermediate-advanced rider, she would continue to make solid progress.

Fancy is a quiet, sweet horse and has the kind of personality that is best won over with patience and affection; however, because she is intelligent, she will challenge a person who doesn't enforce boundaries and behave like her alpha. Fancy is the kind of horse who makes strong attachments to a limited number of people and responds well to those people. 🐾



Area for return address and address of recipients.