



Equine Sanctuary for Healing and Learning

News Notes *for April 2012*

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Susan's Message

Ten years seems to be a point for retrospection. As I think about all of the horses and donkeys that Heaven Can Wait has made a difference for over the years, I also think about the difference our rescues are making in the lives of the many people of all ages who have passed through our gates.

As our community programs have taken root, and are beginning to flourish, I am thinking, "How timely." With all the budget cuts in the education system including cuts for special needs, furlough days for teachers and students alike, and hundreds of veterans who are going to benefit from Medicine Horse Warrior Horse, I'm wondering, "Where is everyone and how are we going to get them all here?"

In the past two years, our visitors have shifted from individual visitors to groups of all sizes. This is a good thing because it means people are taking advantage of their social, education, and community groups to carpool to us. The price of gasoline has contributed to the decrease in individual visitors and in many cases, to our volunteer program as well. I've been told, point blank by interested parents, that even though they would love for their families to participate in our programs on a regular basis, the cost of gasoline prohibits weekly travels to Heaven Can Wait.

We are working to overcome this by helping find more cost effective ways for you and your families to get here. Since launching our programs in 2009, it has been our belief and practice that if one person shows up, we conduct the program. We have structured our programs around this philosophy and that worked for a short while. Now, we are seeing the need to provide a more structured program schedule, but without being so rigid in our scheduling that we exclude those who cannot come on a scheduled day.

Here are some solutions!

- ✓ If you are interested in participating in a group program, form your own group and choose a day to carpool out. We will accommodate your group on the days that you can be here.
- ✓ If you are not able to form a group of your own, contact us. Let us know which programs you are interested in and which days are best for you. We'll connect you with others who have similar interests and you can work out a carpool day.
- ✓ If you are interested in volunteering, but the cost of gasoline is prohibitive, let us know. We'll try to connect you with other volunteers so you can carpool.
- ✓ Ride-On (www.ride-on.org) offers lost-cost transportation services to a variety of people, such as senior citizens and veterans. It also offers special event group transportation, visitor shuttles, and kid shuttles. Again, contact us and we'll help you coordinate transportation with Ride-On. You can also contact Ride-On at (805) 543-7862.

We are in the process of working with Ride-On for Heaven Can Wait to become one of their North County destination points, and that will make it even easier for people to get here.

With all of the cuts in public service programs and in the classrooms, our programs can play a bigger part in the community than ever before. Not every family can afford to hire tutors for their children, why not come here and participate in *The Word Herd* to improve reading and other communication skills? Why not come here and participate in *Someone to Smile For*, *Project HoPE*, or *Medicine Horse Warrior Horse* and learn life skills that can improve your relationship with your family, your partner, with yourself, and give you a new set of skills for facing your life challenges?

Why not come to Heaven Can Wait to learn and practice the responsibilities of horse ownership before committing to the expense of buying a horse? By participating in a 6 or 8 week *So, Your Kid Wants a Horse?* program families experience the practical and sometimes not-so-glamorous side of responsibility, commitment, and hard work that goes with horse ownership.

All of our programs are guided by professionals in their fields. Each program has an Advisory Committee made up of education, healing arts, and mental health professionals. We have equine professionals, therapists and retired and active teachers who can be called upon.

Our programs are free. A few, like *So, Your Kid Wants a Horse?* have a small fee attached. We will never turn anyone away for an inability to pay. Donations are always gratefully accepted because it is donations that keep our equines happy and healthy so they can help in our programs. Donations of *any kind*, including your energy as a one time or a long term volunteer, an item that can be raffled, auctioned or sold to benefit HCW, or your good words in support of our equines and our programs are all gratefully accepted.

Heaven Can Wait is not only a part of the community at large; we are a community. We are a community of like-minded people who believe in giving back to the larger community through supporting our equines and their work in our programs. We are a community of people who seek to remain productive members of their families and communities by facing life challenges with the unique aide of our equines.

We are a community seeking to grow. Your participation in our programs and your continued support in every way help us become a widespread and effective community.

~ Susan

The Soroptimist Ruby Award

The Soroptimist International of San Luis Obispo recognized Susan with the *Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women*, on March 20. The award was graciously accepted by Charlene Salazar on behalf of Susan, due to Susan's usual busy schedule.

The Soroptimist Ruby Award honors women who have worked to improve the lives of women and girls through professional or volunteer work. This award recognizes all of the work here at Heaven Can Wait, including our rescue efforts and the programs. Soroptimist International of San Luis Obispo specifically mentioned the benefits of our programs:



“...all geared towards adults and children, to improve skills such as reading, writing, and communication, coping with grief, fear, pain, PTSD, building self-confidence, working with people of all ages with developmental challenges, autism, Down’s Syndrome, and other special needs as well, through hands-on experiences and taking responsibilities.”

Formerly the Soroptimist Making a Difference for Women Award, the Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women recognizes and honors the first federation president, Ruby Lee Minar. A ruby is also a deep red gemstone associated with wisdom, importance, vitality, strength, vivacity, power and love: all words embodying the strong and compassionate women who are our award recipients.

Learn more about this award and the Soroptimist International at www.soroptimist.org.

Heaven Can Wait in the News

We are getting a great deal of news coverage this month! Josh Petray, Editor for the Paso Robles Press, attended the Medicine Horse Warrior Horse workshop on March 23rd. He spent a couple hours interviewing the mental health professionals and veterans who attended and took lots of photographs.

Check out his article in the March 27th issue of the Paso Robles Press – Section A, back page. This article is a preface for a more in depth article Josh wrote for the *Equine Enthusiast*. The *Equine Enthusiast* will be on the newsstands April 17.

The Paso Robles Press article is accompanied by two stunning photographs, one of the group with the horses, and another of Jenny Gustafson-Dufor with Frankie. Josh told us there are even better photos with the *Equine Enthusiast* article.

As mentioned last month, we also have an article in the *Canine and Equine News* that is due out in April as well.

Not exactly an article, but we are also getting some recognition in the program for the 4th Annual Walk for Autism and Awareness Fair. Heaven Can Wait has been a Youth Activities provider for the Central Coast Autism Spectrum Center for a few years now. We are listed in their provider database, via the Resources tab on their website: <http://autismspectrumcenter.com>. Here’s what you will see in that program.



Abandoned Donkeys Flooding Texas and Louisiana

The nearly two year drought in east Texas and northwest Louisiana has caused donkey owners to abandon their donkeys. The drought forced ranchers to sell off their livestock and since there was no longer a need for the hundreds of guard donkeys the answer seems to be to just turn them loose onto the roads. Even though the drought is over, ranchers continue to abandon donkeys to save the new grass for livestock that is going to make them money.

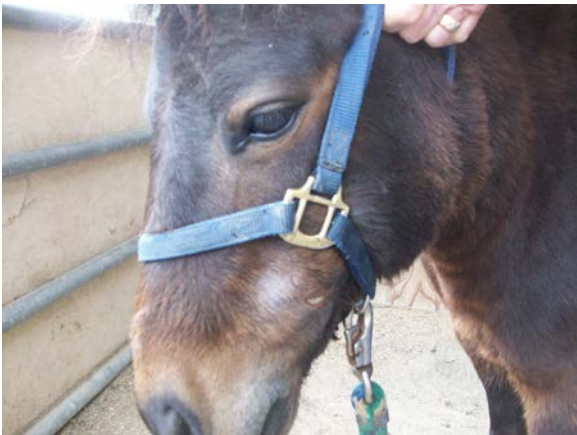
More donkeys are running loose on public roads and public lands than there are homes for. The Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue, a national donkey rescue network has taken in more than 1500 abandoned donkeys from Texas. Normally, this organization takes in around 400 a year.

The problem is made even worse by the fact that a large number of these donkeys are uncastrated males and are very aggressive. Donkeys' physiology makes them harder to castrate than horses, so the operation is more expensive.



These donkeys need homes. If you are interested in adopting or fostering, contact the Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue through their website: www.donkeyrescue.org. You can learn more about this very sad situation by doing an Internet search on "donkeys abandoned in Texas."

Lady—Horse of the Month



Poor Lady; she somehow managed to puncture her cheek clear through to the inside. Her wound is not keeping her from eating, however! We are cleaning the wound every day with warm salt water so hay or dirt will not get stuck in the canal and she is on veterinarian prescribed antibiotics. She'll be good as new in no time.

Lady, a Shetland pony, arrived in February, along with her father, Tramp. Lady and Tramp (named by Susan's great niece and, coincidentally, Susan's favorite Disney Movie) were two among 11 that were rescued due to the former owner's financial hardship. One of our Board Members, Gloria Walter, took some of the rescues and the others were taken to Palmdale by a friend

of Gloria's.

Lady helps in all of our programs and has become a favorite for the Tuesday *Someone To Smile For* group. She arrived not knowing much about halters and being led, but she's one smart gal and figured it out very quickly. Her sweet personality is a great addition to our herd of "tiny ones," which we also call the Four Pony Brigade.

Singer, our *Medicine Horse Warrior Horse* poster boy has fallen deeply in love with Lady and follows her everywhere. It's quite charming to watch little Lady trotting about her daily business, with big ole' Singer sticking to her like glue. We will get photos of this special parade soon!!!

Our Great Volunteers!

This month's great volunteer is Cathie Orrick. In her own words...

I grew up in a suburb of Chicago. A nice area, but after returning to the 'burb' from our annual vacation in Wisconsin's north woods, I'd beg my dad to buy a farm and move us to the country. He'd just look at me – every year I'd beg and every year he'd just look at me. Guess I'd have to do that on my own.

After teaching for several years in the same suburb of Chicago, I had the opportunity to move to California. I'd never been to California, and besides, we were in the middle of a huge blizzard. A no-brainer – I sold my house, rented a u-haul, and headed west, hopefully not to a suburb. In 1979 I landed in Atascadero, bought 10 acres, built a house, and resumed my teaching career. I had made it to the country and was surrounded by oak-studded hills, cattle and an occasional horse!

After teaching 6th and 7th grade for 30-some years (enough to turn my hair gray), I retired and moved uptown to a Paso 55+ gated community. A nice area, but I missed the country. Now I had plenty of time to do "country work" but I didn't live in the country anymore. So, I started *100+ Women Who Care*, a county group of ladies whose goal is to have a positive impact in our communities through direct donations. One of our donation recipients was Heaven Can Wait. The minute I stepped into the corral and nuzzled a horse, I knew I had found my sanctuary. I began volunteering the following week, walking around with my bucket of supplies, grooming whomever came within reach. It is so peaceful and grounded just being with Gryphon or Frankie or Anstar (watch your hat!) or...any horse. What is it with horses and girls?

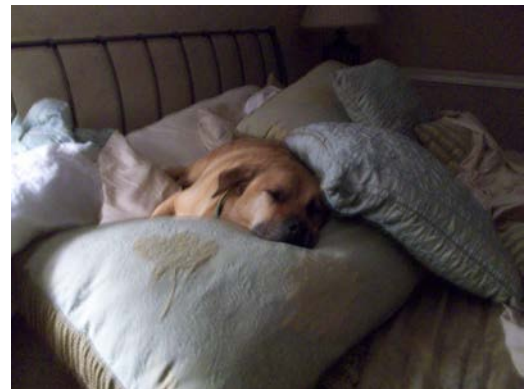
And now Susan and Jackie are designing and implementing a new program, *Medicine Horse, Warrior Horse*. I hope to be trained as a facilitator as I also volunteer with a traumatic brain injury support group. What a perfect match! I so look forward to my Friday afternoons at the ranch: a time to meditate, get dirty, laugh, commune with the equines. If I could talk horse, I wouldn't be able to thank them enough for sharing their sanctuary with me. I hope they understand anyway.

Horse Care Tip of the Month

Time for West Nile vaccinations! Get ahead of mosquito season!

A word about puncture wounds! A recent incident with Pair O' Docs reminds us how important it is to thoroughly check and clean any wound a horse might acquire. One morning last week, we discovered Pair O' Docs with a swollen knee. Upon examination, what appeared to be a scabbed over scrape turned out to be a puncture wound right into his knee joint. It was already infected. Puncture wounds are very serious and the sooner discovered and treated the better. Per Dr. Eckstein, Pair O' Docs received a tetanus shot, is on antibiotics, and the wound is being regularly irrigated.

Random Photos





The Bulletin Board

Items wanted!

Heaven Can Wait is *still* in great need of ground poles, jump standards, another pair or two of cavaletti, some more barrels, traffic cones, and other interesting and safe objects that will work as course obstacles.

Horse Trailer

1965 Safari two-horse straight load horse trailer. One owner. Always stored under cover. Needs new tires, otherwise very good condition. \$2500 / OBO Proceeds go to Heaven Can Wait. Contact Susan 805-368-5702 / susan@heavencanwait.us.

Water Trough Update!

9%

As of March 31, we have met 9% of our income goal for the year. **91%** and nine months to go!

Some very generous donations contributed to this month's goal!

How can you help?

Please continue to spread the word about the good jobs our equines are doing in our programs!

\$162,000



Share this month's newsletter with five new people and ask them to also share it with five more. The newsletter is free. All they need do is sign up on the website, or send an email with "Newsletter Please" in the subject line to susan@heavencanwait.us.

Yes! I want to support the equines and their wellbeing programs!

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500

\$ _____ Other amount **Check #** _____

Credit Card: To donate with your credit card, click the Donate button to the right.
It takes you to our website: www.heavencanwait.us.



Print Name:

Address:

City:

State: Zip: Phone:

Email:

Mail your donation to: Heaven Can Wait, P.O. Box 5, San Miguel, CA, 93451.

Thank you!
