

Home of Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



WINTER 2011

A New Star is in the Sky

On Thursday, October 13, 2011, a new Star joined the constellations above Ann Arbor. With heavy, but oh so grateful hearts, we said goodbye to our wonderful **Star Pony**. Star was foaled in 1978 and joined TRI in 1997 after retiring from the MHJA (Michigan Hunter/Jumper Association) Pony Circuit. She spent the next 14 years carrying some of our most fragile, some of our youngest, and some of our smallest riders. Star was an amazing pony, and she was all PONY! She was full of energy and sass right up to the last few months of her life. As recently as December 2010, we had to lunge Star before classes to give her chance to burn off some of that incredible zest of hers before she was ready to settle down and carry her riders with care.

We even had to have a special warning sign on her stall door to let her tack people know they were dealing with a professional escape artist. **Carrie**, how many times did she escape from her stall? Not that she ever went far – just down to the arena to show off to the other horses. “Look! I did it again!!!”

Her patience with wearing her special “plume” on her halter and the many costumes we created



Star Pony

for her will keep her in the memories of those of us lucky enough to have worked with her. **Dr. Romine**, our amazing vet, often commented that Star would outlive us all. She certainly tried to make his prediction come true, living to the ripe old age of 33. In early 2011, she had two episodes of seizure activity and we retired her with full honors. She spent this year bossing Fable around in the paddock, eating as many carrots as she could get her lips on, and being loved and groomed by every tack person on

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every night. After a summer of no seizures, Star had two prolonged ones in close succession in October. We couldn't bear to have her keep going through the seizures even though we also couldn't bear to lose her but we had to make the decision to let her go. As volunteer **Rusty Towers** said when she heard the news, "Star is part of the TRI legend now. Her influence on and contributions to TRI over the years of her service were so much bigger than her small frame would suggest."



*With a personality far bigger than her pony size- Star loved to have her picture taken.
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Dekker*

Making it an even sadder day, we also said goodbye to **Henry** on the 13th. Henry had been with us just a few months, arriving July 31, but while he was with us he touched so many hearts with his handsome looks, gentle eye, and sweet nature. Clearly a sign of how much he was loved by everyone is the fact that he came in third in this year's TRI-FECTA, quite a feat for a brand new horse. At 23, he wasn't a youngster, but we hoped that, with good care and lots of love, we could enjoy his company for



Henry

many years. That was not to be however. We found tumors on Henry, and the vet determined them to be squamous cell carcinoma, a cancer with a particularly grave prognosis. Henry's vision was also rapidly deteriorating, possibly linked to the cancer. Dr. Romine advised us to euthanize Henry before the rapidly advancing cancer caused him to be in great pain. So with much sadness we said goodbye, taking comfort in the knowledge that he is with Star and, knowing that bossy little pony, she will take good care of him. Where he is now, the cancer and blindness won't bother him and he can be comfortable once again.

As always, our horses left this world with the tender loving assistance of our vet, Dr. Romine, and surrounded by Jan, Tracy, and Jeremy. Star and Henry, we thank you for all your love and care for our riders. You were two very special horses and you have left large horse sized holes in our hearts. You will be missed and never forgotten.

TRI-FECTA 2011

Our first TRI-FECTA race at our new home was an exciting one with a bittersweet ending. All the funds raised in the TRI-FECTA campaign will go toward caring for our wonderful horses in the coming year.

Now, without further ado, the race results. In her last official act, **Star Pony** served as Race Commissioner for the 2011 TRI-FECTA. She kept tabs on all the racers, made sure they didn't eat too many candies or carrots, sacrificing her own waistline to protect them from temptation, then safeguarded the results until the announcements were ready to be made. Thank you, Star.

In twelfth place, or perhaps not, was **Robbie** with \$320.50. I say "perhaps not" as Robbie wasn't supposed to be racing. Somehow he convinced Star to accept his late Entrance Fee and had a good old time playing around at the back of the pack.

In eleventh place was **Dakota** with a respectable showing of \$695. Respectable since Dakota has just a couple of riders so he didn't have a big contingent out there raising funds for him.

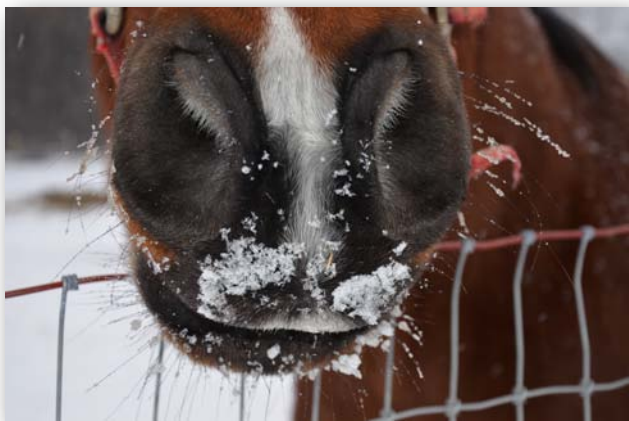


Henry, our handsome boy, came in third place.

In tenth place in the race, but first place in our hearts, was our Race Commissioner, **Star Pony** with \$720. She wanted it made clear that she wasn't really racing. She just felt she could keep a better eye on the racers if she was on the track with them. Is it just me, or do you think she couldn't resist one last chance to kick up her heels and run?

Tightly bunched in positions 9 through 6 were: **Dobbs** in 9th place with \$1,401, **Maizy** in 8th place with \$1,789.50, **Ella** in 7th place with \$1,845 and **April** in 6th place with \$1,945. Check out the photos of our Halloween festivities on our website (<http://therapeuticridinginc.org>) and you'll see why some of the horses felt that Dobbs' costume gave him an unfair advantage.

After racing hard and giving the leaders a good fight for their positions, **Fable** came in a very honorable 5th place with \$2,641. We can always count on Fable to work hard and give 100% to her riders so we are not surprised that she did so well in the race.



B Smiley, our second place winner, is a bit camera shy. He must not know he has the cutest muzzle in the barn!



Miko our first place winner

Sigbjorn put on a burst of speed the last two weeks of the race and moved all the way up to 4th place with \$3,062.50. I think he could have finished even higher in the standings but he got distracted by some yummy reins to chew on.

And now for the top three finishers....

In a bittersweet finish, our sweetheart **Henry** came in third place with \$3,520.50. It is a true testament to his good nature and endearing personality that, after only being here for a few months, he had so many riders and volunteers who had fallen in love with him. Our handsome boy will always be a winner in our hearts.

In second place is one of our previous winners, **B Smiley**. "B" as his riders call him, brought in \$3,920 in donations from the many riders and volunteers who love riding and working with our big red Quarter Horse.

And finally, what will be no surprise to those of you who followed the weekly race updates, in first place, for the Win, with an impressive

\$7,837.50 in donations, is our new guy, **Miko!** Miko's easy going personality, adorable face, and steady gaits have made him indispensable to our riders and instructors. He carries adults and children with equal grace and is a delight for our volunteers who work with him.

Thank you to all our horses for a fun, clean race. You all should be proud of yourselves and your hard work. Thank you to all the riders and volunteers who went out and brought in donations in honor of their favorite horses.

Special thanks go to the following riders and volunteers:

Top collectors by number of bets brought in:
Riders – **Darby Lexcen, Rhys Mitchell, and Austin Saunders**
Volunteers – **Adrienne Nemura, Liz Marsh, and Sharon Marie Hoffman**

Top collectors by amount of bets brought in:
Riders – **Nicholas Curristan, Mary McClusky, and Darby Lexcen**
Volunteers – **Bruce Robinson, Adrienne Nemura, and Anne Lanier.**

Thank you all for your support.

School is in Session

TRI's instructors are always seeking new opportunities to learn and increase our skills. On October 20, we were thrilled to have a presentation on brain injuries right here at our barn. The presenter was **Kendra VanWasshenova**, Physical Therapist with **Milestones**, the University of Michigan's pediatric rehabilitation program. Milestones riders join us each year as part of their programming and recovery. Our thanks to Kendra for a very informative morning, for sharing your experience and knowledge with us, and for giving us ideas of how we as therapeutic riding instructors can assist our riders and compliment the efforts of their therapists.



Looking for Holiday Gifts? Check out the Cafe Press shop. A percentage of every purchase will benefit TRI! Visit the shop at:

<http://www.cafepress.com/TherapeuticRidingInc>



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Volunteer Spotlight

This newsletter, we have the second part of our Volunteer Spotlight from our Summer issue, focusing on a very special group of people. It is rare that a volunteer organization has a volunteer who stays for more than ten years. TRI is especially honored to have not one, but seven stalwart souls who have been with us since 1999, for twelve wonderful years! We wanted to honor all seven of them so you could join us in thanking them for their many years of support and service to our riders.

There must have been something in the air in 1999. How else do you explain why seven of our new volunteers that year have decided to stay with us for twelve years? **Carrie Ashton, Dave Jessen, Ann McCarren, Marcia Mullen, Marina Seeman, Rusty Towers** and one lovely person who wishes to remain anonymous, all joined us that year and remain with us today.

In our Summer issue, we introduced you to Carrie, Dave, and Marcia. Our Fall Newsletter spotlights Ann, Marina and Rusty.

Behind every successful therapeutic riding class you'll find.... a Tack Coordinator. Most people only see the horses proudly walking into the arena, shining and clean, tacked in just the right equipment for each individual rider, stirrups measured, and fly sprayed. Did you ever wonder about the magicians who create this perfection each week? Meet three of our wonderful Tack Coordinators. Ann, Marina, and Rusty come an hour or so before anyone else arrives to get the horses and tack ready for the evening's classes. Some nights the horses are so muddy they have to be taken through the wash racks before they can even begin to groom them. Some nights, they have to juggle horse changes, tack changes, absent riders, even Halloween costumes. Through it all, they

remain calm and unflappable, focused on getting the horses to their eagerly awaiting riders.

Ann McCarren has been the Thursday night Tack Coordinator for most of her twelve years with us. She describes herself as "retired from rearing four wonderful kids who in turn produced 12 wonderful grandchildren." Prior to becoming the Thursday night Tack Queen, she



Ann McCarren with Nick Lupu, one of her longtime Thursday friends, and his leader Hayley Hoffman with his horse Dobbs

managed a book store and owned a small ice cream/sandwich shop. So now we know why she is so organized! Like all of our twelve year veterans, Ann joined us when we were located in Saline at **Julie Arkison's** farm and moved with us to Joy Road then to Morgan Road. She says, "That's a lot of years tacking horses for our kids.

I have enjoyed my interaction with the devoted parents who sometimes drive their kids miles and miles to get to the barn each week. Time spent with "the boss" (Jan), "the coordinator of everything" (Tracy), and "chief caretaker of the premises and horses" (Jeremy) has been a joy. I want to mention my special relationship with Phantom (Jeremy's dog). Even though he always defeats me at the game of Frisbee, I still like him!

The volunteers with whom I work are totally devoted to helping each child safely enjoy their time in the arena on the back of their favorite horse. And because I believe that the Thursday night crew (you know who you are) is and has always been the best, does not mean I am the least bit biased.

A favorite memory for me: I was holding the reins of a horse as a young man dismounted. Because of his disability he did not speak. But this night as his feet hit the ground he looked at me and spoke, "May I pet the horse?" There was not a dry eye in the arena as he lovingly stroked the neck of his horse. Because I mainly have worked behind the scenes in the tack room, I don't often get to see and hear miracles like this but they happen all the time. The riders have such a good time - they don't even seem to realize the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding. I think TRI is a blessing for everyone involved."

Ann, we think of you as a blessing to all of us at TRI. Thanks for all the many ways you have supported our program, both in the tack room and out of it.

Tuesday evenings have certain things we can depend upon: Instructor **Linda Bolton** and her great games and delicious brownies, and **Marina Seeman** in the tack room. Marina has been Linda's right hand person for years, supervising the tack assistants and getting the right saddle matched up with the right horse. When not at TRI, Marina works for the University of Michigan in the Mail Services and Admissions Offices of the Rackham Graduate School. I asked her how she found out about us and she told me:



Marina Seeman and Paul Buisch, Dave Jessen and Megan Hendrick of the Tuesday team, with rider Hannah Ernst on Fable.

I had been reading about TRI in newspaper articles for several years and had been interested in volunteering. The congregation to which I belong has an annual day where we help out at non-profits. TRI was on the list of possible work sites and I thought that would be a good chance to check things out. Also, at the time I was just getting my hair back from chemotherapy and it seemed like there really was no time like the present to start doing something positive. I liked what I saw that day at TRI and signed up for an orientation. Yet I was so nervous my first night of classes I was supposed to sidewalk that I didn't show up. I've been trying to make up for that night ever since.

We certainly have long forgotten and forgiven that nervousness! I asked Marina what kept her coming back after that one night. She said,

Some of the nicest people I know are the TRI volunteers, staff and board members, riders, and parents/caretakers. And some of the sweetest, gentlest horses I've ever met work at TRI. One of our Tuesday riders uses a "talk box" – a device with buttons she can press to "say" Walk on and Whoa. The voice on the box is that of Jan Vescelius – our Head Instructor. The first time the rider used the box, and pressed the "Whoa" button, every horse in the arena stopped!

Marina can always be counted on to fill in as a sub for other Tack Coordinators when they need help. When asked why TRI is so special to her, she shared something that we hear over and over again from our staff and volunteers.

No matter how rough a day we've had, when we get to TRI everything goes into perspective and we can end our day knowing we've accomplished something for the good. It's as therapeutic in its way for the volunteers as it is for the riders.



Rusty Towers working with Spc. Ira Brownridge, Jr. one of our Horses for Heroes participants, helped by Dave Jessen and B Smiley

The final member of our "Twelve Year Team" is **Rusty Towers**. While Rusty is not "officially" a Tack Coordinator, she wears that hat as well as the hats of horse leader and groomer. Rusty is part of the Tuesday morning crew of volunteers/ coffee club. She comes out early to help with getting the horses ready then leads for classes. Rusty also helps with our Milestones classes (See "School is in Session" article page 5) and with our Horses for Heroes classes. In the Winter Sessions, she steps in as the Tack Coordinator for Tuesday mornings.

In the few days she is not at TRI, Rusty is on her condo board and a couple of committees. She's also on the board of the Northfield Township Historical Society (where she used to live and had her own horses!). "I love to travel and went to China this May and am looking forward to visiting Russia next May. I've been

retired from public education (middle school) since 1999”.

After retiring, Rusty joined TRI because she could get her kid fix and her horse fix in the same place. She got involved in working -- then running -- the food booth that we used to do for a fundraiser at the 4-H horse show in Saline, plus working the Ride-a-Thon, which was the other big fundraiser we used to do. “I stayed because things just kept getting better and better, progressing toward bigger goals, and look where we are now! Amazing.”

Rusty shared two special memories with me that sum up her volunteer experience with TRI.

*One memory is the day that **Julianna** (age 4) who couldn't stand to touch most things, including her pony, Star, petted Star's neck and smiled. Her mother and all of us were in tears.*

*The second memory is of watching wonderful **Mastaneh Maybody**, who began as a very frightened yet very determined rider, talk to the audience as the featured speaker at our Kentucky Derby party this past May. She is an inspiring testament to what attracts and keeps volunteers at TRI.*

Working with the dedicated crew on Tuesday mornings is one of the great pleasures of my life and one I hope to continue as long as health allows. They'll have to throw me out!

Not a chance, Rusty. We wouldn't dream of throwing out you, or any of our wonderful volunteers. Once again, my sincere thanks to Ann, Marina, and Rusty, and Carrie, Dave, and Marcia, for their many years of dedication to TRI and our riders. You are very special people and we are honored to know you.

TRI Test – Memorial Edition

Answers on p. 12 Feel free to consult Google or Wikipedia for these questions.

1. Star has good company now that she is up in the sky. Can you name a horse constellation?
2. Remember how Star loved to dress up and wear her sparkly plume? This magical flying TV horse loved lots of colors, RAINBOW colors to be specific.
3. While he may not have a constellation to keep him company, Henry has a pretty royal predecessor. Can you name this Horse of the Round Table?
4. Speaking of horses in books, how many literary horses can you think of that share Star's name?
5. Wonder if our Henry was who the Fab Four had in mind when they were singing this song?

A Loud Whinny of Thanks!

TRI could not exist without our wonderful and generous donors. We rely on your financial support to make it possible for our riders to experience the joy of horseback riding. In this newsletter, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to some very special donors in the Equestrian (\$1,000 - \$4,999) category through October 15, 2011.

- **Helping Hands** - Therapeutic Riding, Inc.'s Helping Hands campaign is designed to develop and sustain a leadership corps of donors who give at the \$1,000 + level. Our Helping Hands donors provide critical support to the day-to-day operations of this extraordinary program and make it possible for TRI to serve more riders and offer innovative programming. We

thank the following donors for lending a “Helping Hand” to our riders.

- **Don Butcher**
 - **Alice Dobson**
 - **Judy and Steve Dobson**
 - **Peter and Patty Fink**
 - **Jake and Anne Haas**
 - **THE MOSAIC FOUNDATION (of R. & P. Heydon)**
 - **Timothy Patton**
 - **The World Heritage Foundation – Prechter Family Fund**
- **Sarah Krein** continued her many years of generous support of TRI with a \$1,000 donation
 - **Ruth Glancy and Bruce and Sharon Robinson** became our newest “adoptive parents” when they each donated \$5,000 to adopt Ella and Miko respectively for the next year. They encourage other donors to join them in adopting one of our three remaining un-adopted horses: Dakota, Hey Dobbs, or Fable
 - **Dr. Gary and Mary McClusky** generously supported our TRI-FECTA campaign with a \$1,000 donation in honor of B Smiley
 - **The First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor** made TRI the recipient of their ‘Sharing the Collection’ program with a donation of \$1,131.
 - **Art Van Furniture** once again showed their support of local non-profits with a generous donation of \$1,000 in June.
 - Our heartfelt thanks to **David and Karen Faust of Faust Sand & Gravel, Inc.** for their generous donation of their services.

Thank you to all our donors for your support. A full list of all 2011 donors will be available in our Spring 2012 newsletter and Annual Donor Report.

Gone But Not Forgotten

TRI has been providing horseback riding lessons since 1984. One of the unfortunate side effects of being in business that long is it means we have had to say goodbye to some of our equine co-workers. Now that we have our own facility, we wanted a way to honor those horses who have passed away. **Anne and Bill McNally** and their son **Gary** (one of our riders) worked together with Jan and Tracy to create a beautiful memory board that is mounted in the hallway leading from the stall barn to the arena. The McNally family donated the materials and labor to create this fitting memorial to our wonderful horses. Riders, volunteers, and staff frequently gather around the board, sharing memories and stories about their favorite horses from years gone by. Our sincere thanks to the McNally family for providing us with a very healing way to remember our special horses.



The new Gone But Not Forgotten board in the barn, gift of the McNally Family.

The Tax Man Cometh

Don't kill the messenger, but tax time will be rolling around very soon. Make that process a little less stressful by making a year-end donation to TRI. Only about 25% of our annual budget comes from rider fees. The rest comes from donations from our supportive community of businesses and individuals. Of every dollar donated, 77% goes directly into providing programming for our riders and caring for our horses. You can donate via a check using this handy form or you can go to our website at <http://therapeuticridinginc.org> and make a secure online donation with a credit or debit card or PayPal account.

And last, but not least...

Look out Paris! We have our own fashion designer. **Marcia Mullen** our own Board Treasurer Party Planner Volunteer

Extraordinaire assembled her finest yet Fall Halloween Collection for the Horses of TRI. Notable designs included: Fable the Princess with her Frog, Racehorse Dobbs, Pirate Miko, B Smiley the Pirate, Sigbjorn the Clown, Swiss Miss Maizy, Diva April and yes....Ella the Martian. Great job Marcia!

You can see photos from all the Halloween festivities on both our website <http://therapeuticridinginc.org> and our Facebook page http://www.facebook.com/therapeutic_riding_inc.



Yvonne Manber and Marcia Mullen with Ella the Martian.



Therapeutic Riding, Inc. 2011 Year End Campaign

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TRI Test Answers

1. Pegasus the flying horse, meet Star the Circus Pony. She's pretty fast herself even without wings!
2. Starlight from the TV show Rainbow Brite.
3. Hengroen was one of King Arthur's horses. OK, it's not exactly "Henry" but it's in old English so I'm sure it MEANS "Henry."
4. I came up with these four. Know any others? Send them to me at therapeuticriding@earthlink.net
 - a. Stardust and Sunstorm from "Ashleigh's Hope" by Joanna Campbell
 - b. Starlight from "Farmer Boy" by Laura Ingalls Wilder
 - c. Starlight from "The Saddle Club" series by Bonnie Bryant
5. "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" by the Beatles, featuring lyrics about Henry the Waltzing Horse (based on a real horse called Zanthus, from Pablo Fanque's Circus Royal)