



# Refuge RR News

Refuge RR for Horses - Alexandria, ON

Vol. XIII Issue No. 1 Fall 2008

*"Our task must be to free ourselves...by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty." -Albert Einstein*

What a year! Incessant snowstorms, rain, drought, you name it, we got it. However, nothing could prepare us for the worst – our well running dry. We noticed a drop in pressure and then soon after, a drop in volume, as the water just drizzled out of our taps. It was at the end of the summer that our water ran out. There was no water for the animals or for our house. We called everywhere to learn why, yet no one had the answer. We then had to call in well drillers. In the meantime, on top of our already busy schedule, we had to drive daily with 500 gallon containers and barrels to get water from a neighbour (5 km away). The well-drillers tried everything to eek water from the existing well but after all attempts failed they determined that we needed to drill a new well. The result was - no water. So that meant drilling a third well, much farther away from the buildings – and still no water... The solution - to dig a fourth well! With costs rising by the hour along with our fear of finding no water on the property, you can imagine we were becoming very uneasy, disheartened and exhausted.

Miraculously, after a few days of heavy rain and snow, water began to trickle out of the original well. The well drillers said it was just surface water and would soon run out. However, here we are weeks later and we amazingly still have water flowing, even more than we had before. So far we have no guarantees that our water will continue to flow so we are taking every measure possible to reduce the amounts of water we use at any one time. Hopefully the water is here to stay and we won't have to continue the search for more.

This has been a very challenging time for the Refuge, but we must say we were astounded by the overwhelming support we received. We would like to thank all the people from across the country that sent in donations to help cover the expense of well digging along with much needed letters of encouragement. The media too was extremely helpful in getting the word out - right when we needed it. Perhaps it is the power of prayer that got the waters flowing again; we sure had enough people rooting for us.

Although this was a difficult time for us, we learned a lot from the experience. It was through these trials that we were reminded of the compassion of our fellow Canadians as they came to our aid and of the fragility of our world, even here in Canada where we have an abundance of natural resources. It is only together that we can protect our precious environment and all the species that depend upon it.

## REFUGE RR CONSTRUCTION SITE



On November 22nd a fantastic group of at least 20 volunteers came out to construct shelters for some of the horses. These volunteers knew exactly what to do and how to do it and went straight to work. They did such a great job of it. Two shelters were built, (Jackie & blind pony shelters). The construction materials came at a special price from Home Hardware in Alexandria, thanks to Katherine Howard's negotiations with Ron (owner). The posts are thanks to David and Bessie. This immense effort was organized by Kristina Brisson.

Another construction day is planned for November 29<sup>th</sup> in which more shelters will be built to replace those destroyed during last winter's storms. A heart-felt thanks to everyone – Rose.

This issue produced by Rose, Cynthia & Julie

## NEW ARRIVALS



**Ginger & Sharlot**

*"The eyes are windows to the soul..." Anton Chekov*

### Ginger & Sharlot - Revisited

For three years now, the eyes of Ginger and his constant companion, Sharlot, have told us stories far beyond what words can convey. Caleche horses for over 22 years, pulling carriages full of tourists in the dirty, smog- and noise-filled streets of Montreal, these 31-year-old veterans were placed three times in three different homes. (You may remember Ginger & Sharlot from our fall 2005 newsletter in which we recounted the story of their then proud adoptive family). But like people who gush over a cute puppy until he grows out of his cuteness, none of the homes wanted to keep them, to give them the rest and retirement they deserved. So now, as permanent residents of *Refuge RR*, Ginger and Sharlot will never be moved again. They will live with us, among their friends at Refuge RR, each day enjoying the green grass that for 22 years they pined for while trudging along the concrete pavement of a hard, cold city.

How anyone would not want these two gentlemen is beyond us. Sharlot is the mischievous one, despite his age. He tries to get away with silly things—like trying to crawl under a fence or running away with a bucket. Yet he is Ginger's self-proclaimed protector and with good reason. It's in Ginger's eyes that we read their history: the fists and the sticks coming at them without warning, for no reason. It is in Ginger's eyes that we see what they have seen: tourists oblivious to the drudgery of the horses who pulled them through extreme weather, hard asphalt, dangerously swerving cars, and pulsating, pounding noise; working day after day and then being stabled

in filthy city stalls—no pasture, no grass, no nothing, just endless misery.

This is all so unnatural for a horse—for even his most basic needs—it is inconceivable. And yet this is what Ginger's eyes tell us. More, his eyes show worry that they will be taken away from us, kidnapped from this dream they are living.

But Refuge RR, promises you this, Ginger and Sharlot: you will never see a fist again and you will never do any work—not ever. You will be well fed, protected, comforted—and oh so loved—for the rest of your lives. *And those we seek to sponsor you will profoundly understand, that work so well done and for so long, deserves a good and long rest...forever.*



**Amstel**

Amstel is an elegant, healthy, mature Warm blood who knows what it's like to be treated like a "has-been". He is a beautiful retired show horse whose perfect legs are a sight for sore eyes. His c.v. includes competing at Spruce Meadows in Alberta and other important show venues. After his sterling show life came to a halt, he was passed around from one riding school to the other, working hard doing the same thing over and over again. Thankfully, his last home contacted Refuge RR to allow this stunning 29-year-old the retirement he deserves. Our gentle Amstel has made friends with Magic and always treats us to a little jig when we bring him his meals. *Please consider sponsoring this perfectly healthy beauty.*



### Chico

*"[How can one] smile and smile...and still be a villain." - Hamlet*

Storms, downed power lines and crushed shelters cannot stop *Refuge RR* from rescuing abused or mistreated horses. In January of this year, we received a call from a woman who claimed that her horse was dying. At first, she seemed genuinely distraught but after a few phone calls, during which we were arranging for transport to pick up her horse, it became clear that the woman just wanted to rid herself of a horse that her daughter found too boring to ride; she considered too old; and he could no longer bring in money for her riding stable. So she'd decided to just starve him to death.

Chico, or "Cheeky" as we call this sweet intelligent boy now, was severely emaciated, smelled horribly of infection and had untreated knee and pelvis ailments. The owner, whose stable of 20 was in fine shape, admitted that the horse "seemed to have problems" but was most probably "timid" and "lazy" so she had reduced his feed to almost nothing. Apparently, for the owner, he just wasn't dying fast enough.

The day Chico arrived, he had a rope tied so tightly around his neck, we could only get it off by cutting it right through. He was so thin that you could see all his ribs and bones through his winter coat.

After the deliberate neglect he'd suffered, Chico may have been timid when he first arrived at RR, but our wonderfully outgoing Nemo—the *welcome wagon* pony—went immediately to Chico's side and wouldn't leave him until he felt comfortable in his new home.

Now Cheeky has made friends with all the ponies and Jasper, our blind but Houdini-smart Pinto. He has gained all his weight back and looks and feels great. Visitors remark on his beauty and gentleness, unaware that this horse was once deemed so boring to ride, he was only a step away from dying of starvation—the slow death his cruel owner had set for him.

Our Chico is worth everything in the world to us so we hope for a *loving sponsor, someone who may have been through hard times too with hard-hearted people and who would understand our now-cheeky "Chico"*.



### Rocky (aka "Major Survivor")

A cat with nine lives has nothing on this 22-year-old Appendix. For the last 17 years Rocky worked hard for his owner as a show jumper. His owner told him she loved him... except for that final day when she contacted the

Refuge to say she no longer wanted to pay for his keep now that he was no longer being used. Can you imagine that? 17 years!! What makes this even sadder is that, seven years earlier, Rocky was the sole survivor of a barn fire where

all the other horses perished. He managed to keep himself alive by stuffing his head out of a cat door. Vets told the owner to put him down but she refused. With treatments and over a year of rehab and healing, Rocky amazingly recovered. Then two years later, Rocky colicked with a twisted colon. It was a horrible prognosis...after hours of surgery, seven feet of his intestine were removed. And Rocky did it again—he survived and recovered. At age 22, Rocky has had to endure more suffering than any being should ever experience. This “major survivor” has become just another name on the endless list of unwanted, discarded horse. His quick thinking and bravery—even the fact that he survived such ordeals—meant nothing to his owner. Rocky knows the Refuge cares as he gets super-spoiled by his number one fan Shelby (my daughter). We think Rocky deserves a medal, but better than that, Rocky will have a loving, safe home forever.



**Sam**

A cruel mind is a curious place to visit. Imagine this: an owner decides to save money by starving his horse until he can ship him to slaughter. No food, no water was given to this gentle 25-year-old Belgian who was headed for the kill box anyway. Emaciated, dehydrated, weak and anaemic, Sam was bought for meat price after a *Good Samaritan* contacted the Refuge. His prospects were dismal; he was painfully, horribly thin. But now, after a few months of intense feeding and supplements, he is finally gaining weight and coming back to life.

He has a long haul ahead but we are sure he will make a full recovery.

Everyone who meets Sam is touched by his gentle, sweet nature. His size requires huge amounts of feed, oils, rice, bran and supplements to help him regain all his weight; this costs three times more than that for an average-sized horse. We are desperate to find a sponsor for our Sammy. *Please contemplate what he's been put through and consider being part of his healing by sponsoring him.*

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### **Shawnee and Bailey**

Refuge RR was called in when these two girls were found neglected and extremely emaciated by SPCA Monteregie. The owner had a nice barn and pasture but chose to lock them inside their stalls, never cleaning and giving them limited food and water. Sometimes they would leave them alone for days on end when they would go on vacation. The owners agreed to give them up to avoid animal cruelty charges...



**Bailey & Shawnee**

Shawnee is a beautiful 28-year-old Appaloosa and Bailey is a 22-year-old Quarter horse. These lucky horses have been brought back to vibrant health by Judy and Craig Miller; part of our special-case foster care team and our St-Lazare RR fundraising outreach group.

*Shawnee & Bailey are presently looking for a permanent loving home.*

## **The language of pain is universal**

The following story is written from the point of view of the foal, as it enters the world—our world—and finds it a deadly place for herself, her mother and all the horses crowded into that same hellish place with them.

*"After 11 long months it was time for me to enter the world....I wondered how it was going to be...I was excited.... Oh my god...after all that, I am not feeling so well...my mom is beautiful but she is quiet with her head hanging low. She tries to clean me but for some reason she seems extremely weak. This is not how I imagined the world....It is dark, cold and smelly...All I can hear are the cries and groans of other horses locked in the same place we are. I do not feel well now...I know I need to get up. Lying on this frozen manure is really not comfortable and mom keeps urging me....After a while a woman arrives. She is supposed to be the one who cares for us, who cares about us.... I feel weaker and weaker by the moment...I feel like I am slipping away...This woman looks at me for the first time and walks in the stall...I think 'this is great. I need to nurse to get better; she can help me'. Instead she walks right over me....slaps my mother and walks away...I need help...can't you see me?*

*Mom is now frantic.....she keeps urging me to get up but I am so frail from my mom being undernourished that maybe my birth was not meant to be....I just lay here on this stagnant floor, full of manure that has piled up for months....Mom has no food and she angrily knocks the bars with her teeth. I put my head down now as I just want to sleep...my body will no longer work soon...All I can hear now is that woman making her rounds with the other horses. I hear her tie my daddy's legs together....then she hits him in the face....a game she loved to call her boxing game....*

*Then she would go to Malcolm....I wondered what he did ...What did he do so bad that he deserved to be hit with a piece of wood?? Did he starve or abuse anyone?? The woman is the abusive one, and no one is hurting her!! Malcolm*

*must have done something worse....but what?? She goes down the aisle one after the other....If they look at her crooked, she beats them...I think some must have understood the game she played as they cowered in their corners and seemed to get fewer beatings....*

*I thought at least she would give us food but instead she slams the door behind her....The workers of the industrial building we were locked in were kind enough to find us food...It was not great as they knew nothing about horses but they knew we needed something to stay alive.... By now I know I am going to die....I don't care anymore...this is not the world I imagined....this must be hell....did I take a wrong turn? How did I end up here...Is this what all living beings experience?? Will it get better? It doesn't matter anymore. I am ready to go. I just got here but I really don't want to be part of the world...it is too horrible....*

*But wait...I hear new voices...they sound different--quiet and concerned. They look inside our stall and gasp...I heard them on the phone saying it was an emergency....then there are lots of people around and everyone is being fed and watered...Mom is still frantic. She knows I am going to die...She knows no one so far has cared enough to help, and I—her beloved baby—was so ill with ulcers and wounds and so anemic....*

*But mom was wrong....they opened the door, held my mom and carefully lifted me off the ground.... These people gasped as I was so light even for a foal...I heard them say "the vets give only a 2% chance for survival". I am going to die....They took me away...Mom was screaming...I wanted to cry to her to tell her I loved her but I was so weak I could not....All the horses cried....they heard mom and wanted to help...Dad got so mad but he too had not only been beaten, but was starving, injured and full of lice....*

*I arrived at the veterinary hospital with a dismal prognosis.... But my rescuers kept encouraging me. They said: 'try, little baby, try...stay with us!' I wanted to try too...they gave me hope.*

*Day after day, I felt a bit better.... After two days, they brought my mom to me. We cried and nuzzled...I love her and she loves me...my*

*wounds still hurt so much but I wanted to nurse. I forced myself to stand as the food and medication the vets gave me made me feel better.... and my Mom was here with me—that's all that mattered.... I still felt weak and I was aching so much. The vets and technicians were poking and prodding me...but they also bathed, brushed and cuddled me.*



*Day after day I felt better..... I would sleep and mom would guard me to make sure nothing as horrible as my first days on this earth would ever happen to me again—would ever, ever be repeated.*

*A month has passed and after much medication, food and TLC, I am able to go to my new home. It is beautiful. Me and mom didn't feel nervous...there are many kind women here and all they want to do is to love and kiss us....*

*This is more like the world I imagined....but I wonder.....why did I have to be born in such a horrible place with such a cruel owner? If those kind people had not shown up, all of us would be dead....and not without suffering agony first."*

All the horses in this case were seized by SPCA Monterey with the assistance and guidance of Refuge RR for Horses. They have all been placed in safe and loving foster homes where they have regained their health and trust in humans (except for one, Malcolm. He is trying to trust again, and only loves his foster mom at the moment.)

Yet this case is still ongoing and Refuge RR and SPCA Monterey are doing everything in their

power to prevent this violent, dangerous owner from ever getting those horses back. But the laws work against us and our best efforts. Our laws allow such cruelty and death-dealing abuse to happen all the time. Animals are not, legally speaking, considered "victims": in particular, our laws do not recognize farm animals as worthy of protection from suffering and abuse. Only the public can change the law. In the meantime, we have promised these horses—NEVER AGAIN.

Refuge RR needs financial support to continue to help rescue and protect horses and animals in need. We also need support to cover the court costs of this case. We know that, like us, you want to ensure that this owner never again—*never, ever*—gets her hands on these horses. Help us. Help us make "never again" a reality for these horses and for *all* horses who live in endless misery—*filth, pain, starvation, abuse*—until Refuge RR finds them.

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#### **AMERICAN HORSES BEING SLAUGHTERED**

By now, most horse lovers know that the USA has banned horse slaughter within its borders. However, the horse industry has not let that stop them. The American horses are still being slaughtered – they are exported to Canada and Mexico, both countries very happy to oblige. These horses are being shipped en masse, spending grueling days and nights in transport trucks, some in double-deckers in which horses are unable to hold their heads in an upright position. Stuffed in these trailers together are stallions, geldings, mares, foals, and even pregnant mares. Pregnant mares weigh more and bring in bigger bucks. Unlike a herd, these horses do not know each other – all they have in common at this time is fear, as they fight, fall and scream together. They often arrive at their destination with gashes, broken bones and in some cases, trampled underfoot of the other horses, to then be dragged out barely alive. Having survived the days of transport without food or water these horses must then wait, until it's their turn to enter the chute. Here a bolt gun to the head is supposed to stun them before they

are strung up by their legs and their throats slit. They are wanted alive when their throats are slit so their hearts can pump the blood out faster...

Many will have you believe that slaughter is done humanely, but the truth is most people don't know what really happens. It is obvious – you cannot have “humane” slaughter of horses. Animals that work for up to 30 years – for us – are brutally butchered in most part for overseas plates. We, as Canadians, should be ashamed of our part.

We have met with and have listened to the horror stories of people who have been behind the scenes of the slaughterhouse. One eyewitness spoke of sleepless nights after working in a QC slaughterhouse. Of all the horrific stories he told, the worst had to be the story of a pregnant mare. As they tried to force her through the chute, in panic she reared and screamed. That poor mare, shoved in the chutes was bolted several times in the head because she was thrashing around. The killer was proud that he could do it the way he wanted to. He showed off to everyone who would watch. Once she went down, her unborn baby was then gutted out of her belly, alive – breathing for about ten seconds before having its throat slit, while the mother watched.

This is one of many unsettling stories recounted to us by workers who came to us to try to stop the madness. When a country as big as the US deems it illegal, you have to question what we are doing here in Canada. Does it make you feel proud to be Canadian? If you feel disturbed – please do something about it? We can change the laws just as our American neighbours did and in the UK. Contact our local MP's and demand changes.

***We must not accept such brutality in our country, in our name as Canadian citizens, anymore.***

Visit <http://www.defendhorsescanada.org/index.php> for more information on horse slaughter in Canada.

August 2008 Film Premiere of the:

### Jill & Tony Curtis Story

Refuge RR for horses was invited to the World Film Festival to meet with the Jill and Tony Curtis at the premiere of their documentary which is an account of the couple's fight to save horses from the unbelievable cruelty of slaughter. Jill & Tony run a horse rescue (Shiloh Horse Rescue and Sanctuary) similar to Refuge RR. Jill was instrumental in stopping the horse slaughter in the USA and the couple is now pushing a bill to stop the export of horses for slaughter in Canada and Mexico.

We were privileged to meet with Mr. Curtis, a Hollywood screen legend, with over 150 films to his credit, and his wife Jill and discuss our shared visions.

**GASTON-** Even though we never got to meet you, Gaston, you broke our hearts. It is unbelievably difficult to be made aware of a horse's situation and then not be able to change the outcome.

At the young age of three, Gaston, was slated to die. We received a call from a stable hand desperately asking us to take this Paint before his boss, the owner of the stable, ate him! He had already made room in his freezer for Gaston.

Refuge RR immediately agreed to take in Gaston, in fact we pleaded with the owner, even offering to pay the meat price and more - anything to save him. But the power-tripping owner just laughed stating there was nothing we could do that would save this horse. Gaston who earned money for his owner's riding school was now destined to continue to feed his owner by becoming his actual meals!

We are all so sorry Gaston that we failed you. Our best wasn't good enough to save you from this evil person. Our only consolation is in believing you are now in a much better place.

## Fuddy from 1981 to 2008



Whiskers, Fuddy, Tego, Excaliber, Mikey & Willy  
(Only Whiskers remains of Fuddy's original herd)



SOMETIMES I  
STILL FANCY I'M  
IN MY OLD  
PASTURES... I'M  
TOGETHER WITH  
MY OLD FRIENDS  
AND NOTHING  
WILL EVER  
SEPARATE US  
AGAIN...

- FUDDY

**In Memoriam: To Fuddy...the horse that inspired it all**

*"In Flanders Field, the poppies grow...."*

Whiskers has his mother's eyes. I kiss those dear eyes every single day, a simple and loving tribute to his mother, my dear friend, Fuddy. She was only 4 and I was 13 when I found her. I had squirreled away all my babysitting money to purchase this beautiful, black Canadian. I didn't even bother "trying her out"; I just knew we were meant to be together. I didn't realize all those years ago that it would be through Fuddy--knowing her, taking care of her and loving her—that the Refuge would come into being, a place of hope and sanctuary for others like her; that she would be its heart and soul, be my compass for compassion. Losing her to the angels this past year left me mute with grief. She was nearly 31 years old, and her loss has left me much older than my years, bereft of my forever friend.

In April, she fell ill—seriously ill—almost without warning. We called in the vet and tried desperately to save her. Her son, Whiskers, at 20 years old never apart from his mom, screamed the whole time, panicking to see his mother down like that. He poked and nudged her, trying to make her move. "Feel better, Mom...get up, get better," he seemed to say. You could feel her desperation and worry for her only son—at 20, a spoiled, cherished baby, a true Momma's boy—so she tried for him, she tried her best to recover, to come back from the death spiral. We tried everything: I didn't want her to die—she couldn't die—*what would I do without her?* She made everything okay. Just the thought of her always buoyed me when things were bad and getting worse. We had a contract, she and I: she could never die, never leave us. As time passed, we knew—I knew—we couldn't save her. 'This can't be happening,' I thought, 'not Fuddy, not my faithful, loving friend...please, please...not Fuddy.' I was completely undone.

Afterwards, Whiskers stayed by her...he pawed, nuzzled, pulled on her mane, as if to say, 'okay, mom, quit joking...time to get up now.' He couldn't grasp why she was so still and motionless. He stood by her for some time, trying to understand what had happened, why she was no longer there. What would he do without his mom? In the pasture, if they lost sight of each other for even a minute, they would cry loudly for each other until they were side by side again. Whiskers towered over his mother, always. This massive, majestic boy—he so big and she so tiny beside him. She took care of him every day she lived. To her, he was her baby still, despite his size. Fuddy felt about Whiskers as I did about her; responsible for her from the day we got together. I'd seen many kids

and adults just discard their horses and ponies when they'd outlived their usefulness, sent to meat or sold to just anyone. All those years ago, I promised Fuddy solemnly that would never ever happen to her. I couldn't fathom why others didn't feel the same and, ultimately, it was my dedication to her that inspired me to help others whom nobody wanted, who had nowhere to go or whose lives were in danger. And through it all, my great friend, Fuddy, saw me through my marriage, the births of my children, the loss of family and friends. She was the mainstay of my personal life and the inspiration for my work, for the Refuge. How do you measure such loss: I have no words to describe it.

Only Whiskers' grief echoed the gaping hole her loss had made in my heart. Night after night, day after day, we heard Whiskers crying, calling, and mourning his mother, my Fuddy. And with each cry, my heart broke over and over again. We watched as Little Black, Whiskers' long-time friend, tried to relieve his pal's sadness; this tiny pony tried to engage Whiskers in playtime by crawling under his belly, tried to involve him in a scratching session. But he was inconsolable, lost without his mother.

Some time passed and one day, the same day I noticed that Whiskers had given up calling for Fuddy, I went out to give him his daily kiss, and something strange caught my eye. Over Fuddy's grave had grown dozens of huge sunflowers, a place where none had been planted—in fact, where nothing had ever been planted. And all the flower faces were inclined downward, as if facing towards her. It looked like there was an army protecting her place of rest. It baffled me, but it comforted me too.

I took it as a sign—a reminder to myself when I am missing her most—of our journey together, a journey that continues, inspired by her and dedicated to her: to spread the love Whiskers and I had for her to other horses and animals that never had the life she had. She taught me how to have compassion—a compassion that fuels our mission and will go on and on until there is no more suffering. Like that army of sunflowers, positioned permanently to protect and rescue, Fuddy's Refuge goes on to champion the powerless.

As hard as it was to lose her, I had the privilege of loving her....I wish for you all to try to look into your horse or animal friend and see—*feel*—that they are not so different from us, and that we all should love and respect all the creatures of this planet. You might surprise yourself and have one of the greatest experiences of your life. In fact, it might even change your life. It changed mine.

*Bye Fud...I love you. - Rose*

**Update on harness racing in Quebec** As some of you may know, Attractions Hippiques (reported on in last issue), the company that owned the Hippodrome of Montreal (formerly, Blue Bonnets), among four other racetracks, finally went into receivership this past summer. Senator Paul Massicotte, its major sponsor, could not garner any more funds from the government and was unable to find a second venue for the expansion of harness racing in Quebec. Paul deLean in The Montreal Gazette reported that sales of Canadian Standardbreds dropped by \$3000 as of October 11th of this year. Many horses were sent to slaughter; most under 2 years old. The last auction in October was a disaster, according to Caroline Robitaille, auction director for the Cooperative des Encans Standardbred (CESQ). Refuge RR was deluged with requests when this happened, and was able to place as many Standardbreds as we were alerted to. It's fortunate that the government stopped funding a practice rife with abuse. But it's also a poignant reminder of how a particular breed is decimated by overuse, abuse (see last issue's stories of Belle and Beezer)—or as in this case, needless slaughter.

### Update - Mustangs

(The Calgary Herald, January 23, 2008)

In response to concerns that weapons, snares and even vehicles were being used to round up wild horses, the province has rewritten rules around [the capture of Mustangs]. The new regulation specifies these methods can't be used to chase down horses, said Dave Ealey, a spokesman for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. Instead, they must be humanely corralled on designated land.

"It wasn't something that we advocated or wanted to happen, but it wasn't written into the regulation to deny that from happening," Ealey said. "This removes all doubt."

The Alberta government, however, stopped short of eliminating its sanctioned roundup. This omission left Bob Henderson, president of the Wild Horses of Alberta Society (WHOAS), shaking his head. Henderson, a retired veteran of the Calgary Police Service, continues to lobby for a moratorium, contending too few horses remain. He also wants the province to prohibit private landowners from shooting the animals when they stray onto their land.

"We believe the horse regulations are still inadequate for protection," Henderson said "The numbers are rapidly declining compared to what we've seen a few years ago."

The province estimates the population hovers between 200 and 300.

Permits are required to capture the horses. From 2002 to 2006, the government granted 105 permits, Ealey said, but it doesn't collect information on what's done with the horses. Ealey said the animals are often used on ranches or for rodeo stock. Some are slaughtered, their meat packaged for export.

As reported in our last issue, these so-called feral horses are essential to the survival of other species, like moose and elk. We, along with other horse advocacy organizations, believe that these wild horses are descended from the first horses brought to Canada by the Spanish. (<http://www.northernhorse.com/wildhorses/index.php> for evidence of DNA). From 3,000, this heritage species of Canada now stands at a mere 200 to 300, thanks to the policies of the Alberta government. Please write to your MP and to the Alberta government to keep this important Canadian issue at the forefront of all our conservation efforts. For more information, please email the address above or Refuge RR for Horses at [blick.gerg@sympatico.ca](mailto:blick.gerg@sympatico.ca)

### Canadian Mustangs Gain Hoof-hold

*Kylie Anne Gergely, age 13*

As a follow up to my previous article in our Oct. issue on the Canadian Mustangs' fight for survival, I have been in contact with other mustang advocates as well as Rob Kessler of the government of Alberta. Mr. Kessler indicated, "*Sustainable Resource Development had agreed to review the current Horse Capture Regulation as a result of concerns expressed by horse advocates about enforcement and the overall protection of feral horses.*"

With a brief hold on capture permits, new amendments have been made to the Horse Capture Regulation, which include; replacing the word *hunting* with *capturing*, restricting the issuance of horse capture licenses and the issuing of fines for contravention of the regulation. According to Mr. Kessler, "*These amendments are intended to provide better protection of the feral horses*" ... "*Be assured that it is not the intent of the government to eliminate these animals, but to help ensure their survival in balance with the environment.*"

None of these things would have happened if individuals and groups hadn't questioned the situation. Regrettably the roundups will continue and these mustangs will eventually be lost, if only a little slower than before. The new regulations are only small steps towards the ultimate goal of having these horses truly protected as a "Heritage Species" and given a protected sanctuary, free from capture. To voice your concern for our last Canadian Mustangs contact Rob Kessler of Sustainable Resources Development at [Feral.Horses@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Feral.Horses@gov.ab.ca) or call 422-4568. Reprinted with permission from Millennium Mirror

## Special Events

### Veterinarian visit

In May, Dr. Jennifer Jobin organized a vet day for Refuge RR. Dr. Jobin along with Dr. Yves Rossier, Dr. Alix Serapiglia and Dr. Marie Sophie Gilbert brought veterinary students from St. Hyacinthe Veterinary school to spend a day at the Refuge floating teeth, vaccinating and giving overall checkups for all horses at the refuge. Dr. Diane Blais and her husband also came to vaccinate all the dogs and cats. All these wonderful vets donated their valuable time and veterinary expertise for the horses and the students got some great first-hand experience with a whole variety of different horses of different ages, breeds and temperaments.

It was a great day for everyone. Each and every vet was so kind and gentle with the horses. The horses were treated like they were all worth a million dollars and surprisingly they cooperated smoothly knowing that the vets were there for their good. They remained curious and easy to handle throughout (except of course for Julie our wild mustang – now she wasn't having any of this! She stayed at a safe distance, just observing). Thanks to everyone who came!

## Fundraisers:

### UPCOMING EVENT

## Bourbon Street West

Saturday, November 29<sup>th</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Event – prizes/auction/music

5pm – 9pm

*Blues Train Deluxe & Soul Fusion*

**For info call Mary 514-239-9328**

### ANIMAL ADOPTION & PET FAIR

On Oct. 4th Refuge RR was invited to the Animal and pet fair organized by the caacQ, in Beaconsfield. This was an opportunity to show that horses are just as much a pet as a dog or cat. We even brought along Bijoux, a cute pony, who was loved and admired by all. Bijoux was adopted by Refuge RR's Kristina.

### Equifest August 2008

This event was held in St. Lazare by the **Club Equestre les Forestiers** for the landowners of St. Lazare. It was turned into a fundraiser for the Refuge RR for horses and a great time was had by all. Thanks everybody!

### Mon Village Oct 8<sup>th</sup>

This fundraiser was originally intended to raise funds to rebuild shelters destroyed by snowstorms last year. At the last minute the monies had to be redirected towards drilling of wells. This wonderful evening, organized by **Kristina Brisson**, included dinner, door prizes, raffles and horse talk.

## THANK YOU

We wish to thank the following individuals for all their generosity. We sincerely apologize for any names we have mistakenly omitted. You know who you are and we thank you all from the bottom of hearts. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped out in whatever way you could.

All the fosters - whom are much needed  
All the sponsors – this is a great help!  
Alain – for maintaining existing website  
Basil Chan & his team for the new web site  
Blues Train Deluxe - band for continuous support  
Carol Weightman, Rick Karam (Jesse & Grace)  
CEF of St-Lazare for all their advertisement help  
Crazy Carousel  
Cynthia D'errico  
Danielle Gosselin  
Dr. Jobin, DMV  
Hagen  
Helen Lacroix of Animatch  
Jeanine St-Onge (B-day gifts)  
Josee Brault  
Karen Jacobson (boxes of blankets & meds)  
Linda Robertson of SPCA Monterege  
Magolie & Dan from MD Stables long term foster  
Masterfeeds  
Miriam Cote - gift donation for Karin Gebert  
Mr. Charlesbois - His property for the Equifest  
Sandra & Brianna, Kennedy and Tony Ballard for all they did for King and for fostering Chanel  
Sandridge Saddlery  
Soul Fusion - band for continuous support  
St-Hyacinthe Hospital for the spring Vet day  
Yazoo  
Yves Vendetti

### **Special mention:**

Thanks to **Annik Symmons** who had a tack sale at her barn in St. Lazare and all proceeds were donated to the Refuge. She raised \$617.00. Thanks Annik!

Thanks to **Josee Brault** who held a riding show in which the children had a great time and all the proceeds were donated to Refuge RR. Thank you.

Special thanks to our St. Lazare team: **Judy Miller, Kristina Brisson, Karin Gebert, Linda Glasgow, Mary Parker, Linda Thompson, Lise Stiebel**. You guys are such a great help. Thank you.

A very special thank you to **Hanna**, for emergency fostering.

Special thank you to **Andre Larocque** our hay supplier and for the desperately needed WATER!!

Thank you to all who came through and donated to pay well drilling costs

Thank you to all the individuals and companies that donated products for raffle and auction at the fundraisers, as well as the artists that donated beautiful paintings: Shernya Vininsky, René Caouette, Marjane Bélanger

**Honorary Donations** were received in honor of the marriage of **Julia & Ralph Scotland** who requested that the Refuge receive a donation in lieu of wedding gifts. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your celebration. We received many generous donations from friends of the happy couple.

**Averil Robinson** became a sponsor of our pony (Magic) in honor of the above wedding.

**Memorial Donation** given in memory of a dear friend, by Brian Beavis. Brian became the proud sponsor of our horse **Jimmy** in memory of **James E Barrett**.

The **Ralph** family from Toronto and London Ontario made a special donation to build a new shelter for our aging horse – Jackie. Jackie is very grateful and so are we!

**REFUGE MEDIA COVERAGE:** Refuge RR for Horses was ever present in the media this past year: Ottawa Citizen, CBC, CFCF, CTV, Standard Freeholder, The Review, Hudson Gazette...

### **Gone but never forgotten...**

**Fuddy** – See pages 8+9.

**Chanel**- She was beautiful even when she was emaciated. The day she arrived at the refuge we were sickened by the bones that protruded from her body. As she started to heal, her personality came out and she took on the role as protector. At 31 years old, the years of racing, show jumping, working as a school horse were distant memories... and with a beautifully rounded body, Chanel left us. Her last years were with a full belly, friendship, and love.

**Jingles**- poor Jingles, we were never really sure how old he was but at the time of his death we knew he was well into his thirties. This sweet little pony did not have a mean bone in his body... Jingles was always there to accept a hug or to lick your hand, forever showing affection. He always made a point to come over and see you, unlike the owners who neglected and forgotten him on their forested country property for 8 years. When Jingles died Magic his pony friend put his head on Shelby's shoulder....his friend was gone.

**Buddy, Tippy and Rudy** - our loving goats all passed away at the age of around 12.

**Emma**- She was the sweetest dog ever. She was given up by her family after 6 years. Lucky for us...we had her for the best years of her life...

*Have a Safe & Peaceful Holiday!*

*- Rose*

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**E-mail: [blick.gerg@sympatico.ca](mailto:blick.gerg@sympatico.ca)**

All donations are tax deductible. All receipts issued at the end of the year unless otherwise requested.

