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# Equine Hospital Newsletter

Colorado State University

VETERINARY TEACHING HOSPITAL

Fall 2009

Volume 4, Edition 1

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## The Equine Hospital

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## The Equine Hospital Helps Area Breeders Care for Their Beloved 'Gypsies'

As successful breeders and competitors of Irish Cobs, Jan and Charlie Cox, owners of Parnelles Irish Cobs and Irish Rose Farm in North Fort Collins, feel lucky to be supported by the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

"We saw these beautiful horses for the first time at the CSU Equine Reproductive Center and just fell in love. They have such a majestic presence," says Jan. With their broad chests, flowing manes, and unique black and white painted color, the Coxes' horses certainly capture the imagination.

Historically, these flashy, hard-working horses pulled the wagons and flat-carts of the Gypsy people throughout Europe, Ireland, and Great Britain. The Romany, or Travelers, as they prefer to be called, bred a horse that could pull a wagon all day, and then baby-sit the children placed on its back in the evening when the Travelers made camp. Today's Gypsy horses have main-

tained their good-natured disposition along with their strengths as solid harness horses. Yet, in addition to pulling wagons they are excellent riding horses, competitive in both Western and English disciplines.

The couple is in agreement: They could not do what they do without the help of CSU. They feel lucky to have the Veterinary Teaching Hospital facility to call on in emergency situations that have required intensive care and surgery for their Gypsies.

This was particularly true for their hospital experience with their horse Ardan, a beautiful young gelding born on their farm to one of their favorite mares.

"The first time we brought Ardan in to the hospital, he was 3 months old and had eaten some of his mother's mane that he could not pass," says Charlie.

Emergency and critical care surgeon Dr. Diana Hassel worked on Ardan's case.

*(continued on Page 7)*



Charlie Cox, driving Parnell's Nuala, along with Sheila Grange, at the Longs Peak Scottish Irish Highlands Festival in Estes Park, Colo.

## Welcome



Dear Friends, Clients, and Colleagues,

Welcome to the fall edition of the *Equine Hospital Newsletter*. As always there will be a few changes to our staff this time of year as the new residents and interns start and a few familiar faces depart. Our interns and residents do a lot of work behind the scenes to make sure our clients and their animals have the best care possible and we appreciate the dedication and compassion they show for this work.

In addition, there are a few changes to the hospital itself. Our radiology department has just completed its conversion to digital radiography. This will improve diagnostic capabilities and also improve the transfer of images to referring veterinarians and clients. A new bone scan system is currently being installed as well as a computed tomographic scanner. These too will vastly improve our diagnostic capabilities.

I am concluding my tenure as the Equine Section Head. Dr. Gary Baxter is returning from his sabbatical to resume those duties. It has truly been a privilege to lead a group of people who are so dedicated and passionate about taking care of horses.

As always, we have been busy this spring and we appreciate the faith you have put in us for the care of your animals and clients. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Regards,  
Chris Kawcak

## Early Intervention Can Make the Difference for Newborns

“The most important thing to understand is that neonates (foals less than 30 days old) are not just small horses. They have an extremely fragile system. An acceptable standard of care for an adult horse may not apply. It is almost as if you are dealing with a completely different animal,” states Dr. Gabriel Landolt, Assistant Professor of Equine Medicine. “Knowing what to look for, being prepared, intervening early, and monitoring closely are the most important elements of care that will often make the difference for foals.”

No one knows this lesson better than Jim and Pat Chynoweth proud owners and surrogate parents to Pat, an affectionate, chocolate-brown burro, whom they nearly lost just a few days after his birth.

“About a week after Pat was born, we noticed he wasn’t nursing and he was obviously in discomfort,” says Jim. “The next day, he was worse. He would barely stand and we knew we needed to do something.”

The Chynoweths’ regular veterinarian, Dr. Raye Harris of Summit Equine Veterinary Services and graduate of the Colorado State University veterinary program, recognized the critical situation for Pat and referred them to the Equine Hospital for the intensive care that would be required.



*Jim Chynoweth with his chocolate-brown burro, Pat.*



*Dr. Jenny Sonis with one of her favorite patients, Pat, while in the hospital.*

Upon arrival at the hospital, Pat was extremely lethargic and dehydrated. He was suffering from colitis and needed immediate nutritional support. “It was amazing,” recalls Jim. “The moment we arrived it was all-hands-on-deck. It was a real group effort to treat Pat.” The team dedicated to caring just for him included equine medicine clinician Dr. Gabriel Landolt, medicine resident Dr. Jenny Sonis, and emergency criticalists, Dr. Tim Hackett and Dr. Eileen Hackett. Not to mention the equine nursing staff and senior veterinary students.

“Experience with neonatal care gives students a real appreciation for what newborns and foals require,” added Dr. Landolt. “Neonatal care is very tricky. You’ve got to provide the best therapy to get good outcomes and you need to be aggressive from the get-go. Many newborns require hospitalization because of the simple manpower required for care.”

The Chynoweths live on a sprawling, 40-acre farm on the north side of Wellington that is home to more than 100 animals including goats, chickens, llamas, two burros (Pat’s parents), and a horse, making 24/7 monitoring of a newborn a near impossibility.

Pat is now 11 months old and is doing great! He is an affectionate youngster and the team of veterinary professionals has been replaced by Sophie, his mother, Freckles, a canine companion, and, of course parents Jim and Pat. A happy ending from a true team effort.

## Ophthalmology Helps Mini-Horse Continue Care for Others

Part of what contributes to the excellence of care offered to equines by the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital is the team of specialists available for consultation and treatment of unique problems. The Ophthalmology Service is one such team.

Staffed by Drs. Julie Gionfriddo and Cynthia Powell, both board-certified ophthalmologists, three resident veterinarians in training for specialty certification, and specialty specific technician Cheryl Spencer, the service is dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of ocular problems in all types of animals, including horses.

Recently, Dr. Powell and veterinary resident Dr. Enry Garcia were able to save the eyesight of one special miniature horse, Snuggles. Snuggles is not just any horse. She is part of a special group of miniature horses from the nonprofit organization Minis and Friends in Lubbock, Texas.

Snuggles and her compatriots spend their time traveling across Texas visiting rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, and special needs children centers and hospitals to bring cheer to patients through equine therapeutic healing.

Snuggles, who is 4 years old, lost her left eye to an infection when she was a month old, and her right eye has glaucoma. While it goes without saying that sight is very important to any horse, Snuggles needs her sight in order to continue her job as a therapy horse.

“Without her sight, Snuggles could not work, as it would be impossible for her



*From left to right, front row: Snuggles, Melanie Tatum, Dolly, and Cheryl Spencer; back row: Ed Jones and Optho team student Arron, Dr. Cynthia Powell, and Dr. Enry Garcia.*

to navigate the foreign surroundings of nursing homes or hospitals. She would have basically had to retire,” says Melanie Tatum of Minis and Friends.

“As glaucoma continued to affect Snuggle’s eyesight, our local veterinarian recommended we bring her to Colorado State because the hospital is known for its care of vision problems in horses.”

Without a second thought, Melanie and friend Ed Jones, loaded Snuggles and her traveling companion, Dolly, into the trailer and headed out for the long drive to Colorado.

Her efforts proved well worth the trip. Snuggles underwent successful laser surgery on her right eye in October and her six month checkup this spring showed Snuggles is still doing well.

“The prognosis is very good at the moment,” says Dr. Garcia. “We are happy with the outcome of the surgery and she is doing well this spring.”

Although it’s unlikely that Snuggles will ever have the ability to see clearly, the surgery helped to improve her vision, and her work to help others has not been hindered by her limited sight.

## Charity Horse Show Proceeds Support Equine Field Service

This year marks the 40th annual Larimer County Spring Charity Horse Show. Originally, the event was held at the Larimer County Fairgrounds in Loveland, however, over the years due to weather conditions the show was moved to the National Western Events Center in Denver. It is now a multiple-breed show with a National Reining Horse Association competition opening the first three days. The final three days consist of Arabian, Half Arabian and Open Western, Open English, Equitation for varied seats, and Opportunity Classes. The latter classes allow people who have not experienced a national competition to participate and see how much fun a Class A level show can be.

This event, in part, benefits the Equine Field Service at the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Donations over the last 39 years have totaled more than \$125,000. Money from this event has funded computers for teaching, textbooks, power dental equipment, state-of-the-art digital radiography for field service, and many other worthwhile items over the years.

“It is a privilege for us to provide on-site veterinary care for this quality show. The Equine Field Service staff are very thankful to Barbara Arkin (manager), Ann Burton (show secretary), and all of the competitors for the many years of support,” said Dr. Bruce Connally, clinician in the CSU Equine Field Service.



*Drs. Bruce Connally and Ann Davidson of the CSU Equine Field Service.*

## Exchange Program Gives Global Look Into Veterinary Medicine



*One of Clare Owen's favorite patients, The Chocolate Dash, or Choc to his friends, with owner Deb Christy and equine medicine clinicians Dr. Lutz Goehring, Dr. Sonya Wilsterman, and Owen.*

Clare Owen, senior veterinary student from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in Edinburgh, Scotland, just finished her four-week exchange program with the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. She had rotations in equine medicine, surgery, and emergency and field service. Dr. Sherry Stewart, CSU assistant dean for Administration and Student Affairs, facilitated this international partnership where we exchange students at different intervals so they may have a global look into veterinary medicine.

“The two programs are supported by world-renowned veterinary schools, and both share international reputations for excellence in basic and applied biomedical sciences. It was a perfect fit for the two

universities,” said Dr. Stewart. The exchange, kicked off this summer, had veterinary student exchanges in clinical rotations and the Merck Summer Research Program.

Owen was off to a quick beginning. “The day started with a busy schedule in the Equine Surgery and Lameness service and at first I felt overwhelmed. However, the next day with the help of my fabulous student rotation group, a brilliant nursing staff, my clinicians – Drs. Bellezzo and Amend – I had a patient through surgery, found my way to the pharmacy, and had mastered most of the paperwork! I had the most amazing experience at the CSU VTH.

“Thank you to everyone I met for making this exchange such an incredible experience” said Owen.

## Collaboration to Improve Equine Nutritional Services

The equine section of the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital along with the Department of Animal Sciences and Purina Feeds are excited to announce a collaborative effort in equine nutrition.

The goal of the collaboration is to improve the dissemination of nutritional information to the community and help provide increased nutritional support for our patients, clients, and students.

“Nutrition is vital to all equines whether they are recovering from a serious illness or are healthy performance horses – not to mention mares, foals, and

the geriatric horse population,” says Dr. Gabriele Landolt. “Our hope is to connect clients with the right information for the variety of nutritional questions that come up when owning a horse.”

The group is lead by Dr. Landolt, CSU VTH equine section, and is joined by Dr. Tanja Hess, equine nutritionist with the Department of Animal Sciences, and Taylor Moss, equine representative for Purina Feeds. Krista Dickinson, equine nurse; Andrea Day, facilities member responsible for forage and feed purchases; and Brittany Davis, senior veterinary student, will also partner in this group effort.

*If you have a nutrition question or would like more details, call the equine nutrition information phone line Monday-Friday at (970) 297-5023. Please leave a message with your name, best contact number or e-mail, and your question or problem, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.*



*Taylor Moss and Moon*



*Dr. Tanja Hess and Harley*



*Dr. Gabriele Landolt, with her dog, Skyler, and Cherokee.*

## Colorado State University – The Equine Hospital

Gifts to the Equine Hospital at Colorado State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital are used to support clinical care through equipment purchases, enhance the Professional Veterinary Medical Program for our students, provide funding for clinical research programs, and provide discretionary funds to the Equine Hospital section head that are used where most needed. If you would like to make a donation in support of the Equine Hospital's

needs and goals, please complete the form below and return with your gift. If you have any questions on making a donation to the Equine Hospital, please contact Judea Franck, Associate Director of Development for the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at [judea.franck@colostate.edu](mailto:judea.franck@colostate.edu) or at (970) 491-2351. Online giving also is available at <https://advancing.colostate.edu/EquineHospital/give>.

Enclosed is my/our check for a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Payable to **Colorado State University Foundation – Equine Hospital**)  
This gift is from:  me  my spouse and me  my partner and me

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A matching gift form is enclosed.

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Please apply this gift to:  Advances in Equine Health Fund # 57383  
 Equine Medicine Clinic Services and  
Research Fund #53943

*Please return this form with your gift to:*

Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, c/o CSU Foundation, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522-1870

*The Campaign for Colorado State University*

57383/V1005



## Wish List for the Equine Hospital

Listed below are items both large and small that will enhance our ability to provide quality care for our equine patients and help instruct our senior veterinary students. If you are interested in making a donation to fund any of this equipment, call Dr. Gary Baxter, Equine Section head, at (970) 297-0382, e-mail [gary.baxter@colostate.edu](mailto:gary.baxter@colostate.edu); or Judea Franck, associate director of Development for the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, at (970) 491-2351, e-mail [judea.franck@colostate.edu](mailto:judea.franck@colostate.edu).

### Foal Positioning System

*Function:* To assist in providing positional support for our newborn foals when they are recumbent to keep them in a secure and upright position. The HUG-U-VAC system is an inflatable bean bag-type mattress that forms to the patient.

*Estimated cost:* \$300

### Support an Equine Resident

*Function:* To educate and train equine specialists of the future. Donations will be earmarked for equine surgery and medicine residents during their three-year specialty training program, specifically toward professional development, conference attendance, and off-site visits.

*Estimated cost:* All donations are accepted.

### Cameras for Colic Surgical Suite

*Function:* Two surgical cameras and a viewing screen would provide our clients with the option of being able to view their horse's surgery. One camera perspective will show the surgical suite and another camera will capture the incision and document surgical lesions. These imaging services would allow us to invite concerned horse owners, referring veterinarians, and larger groups of veterinary students to participate in the surgical experience. Further, this system would allow for documentation of cases that could be shown to owners not present at the time of surgery or future case rounds for veterinary students.

*Equipment:* Two Sony pan/tilt/zoom color video cameras, video converters, cables, and flatscreen TV.

*Estimated cost:* \$5,000





## Receptionists

**Sally Hensley** is a native Coloradan who spent 17 years in Alaska before returning to Fort Collins to work in various local veterinary clinics. She is also an artist who, most recently, has specialized in drawing commissioned animal portraits.



*Sally Hensley*

Having been a client of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital in the past, Sally is happy to be on the other side of the counter as large-animal receptionist. She has worked at Colorado State University since March 2009 and enjoys the challenge of improving client service at the large-animal reception desk. Sally said she finds it especially rewarding to develop ongoing relationships with many of the clients she meets.

Outside her work at the CSU VTH, her interests include riding and training her horses, Splash and Kilauea (named after a volcano in Hawaii), in a variety of disciplines but mostly dressage and trail riding. She also enjoys fly-fishing, hiking with her Aussie dog Cooper, and spending time with her family.

## Pamila Johnson

has lived in Colorado for most of the last 13 years with her twin sons, Chris and Nik. She has been working reception for the VTH since January 2008. She started out in small-animal reception and



*Pamila Johnson*

helped to cover all areas. She applied for a permanent reception spot with the large-animal section in February 2009 and has been with them since.

An avid outdoor person, she enjoys camping, hiking, and tubing down the Poudre River with her family. That family also includes two dogs, Riley, a black Lab, and Rufus, a beagle adopted from CSU through the Humane Society. One organization that Pamila is passionate about and volunteers her time to is Habitat for Humanity. She has helped to build six homes in the Fort Collins area, including her own.

She is excited to be part of the equine team, as she was last involved with horses growing up in San Diego.

## Hello

July is the time of year when we welcome our new residents and interns. **Dr. Lacy Kamm** is an equine surgery resident who graduated from Colorado State University and completed an internship at Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital in Kentucky, followed by an equine research position at Cornell University. We are glad she is back.

Also joining the Colorado State University Equine Field Service is **Dr. Amber Boring** who is a recent graduate from Purdue University Veterinary School.

At the Equine Reproduction Laboratory in the theriogenology residency, we welcome **Dr. Alicia Lindholm**. A graduate from Washington State, she also just finished an internship at Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital.

**Dr. Valerie Moorman** is joining the emergency team and will be an additional off-hours surgeon. She has completed her equine surgery residency at Oklahoma State University.

## Goodbye

**Dr. Ryan Carpenter** has completed his equine surgical residency and is now working in California and specializing in racing thoroughbreds. Ryan's charm and wit shall be missed by all who had the opportunity to work with him over the last three years.

**Dr. Catie DeLuca** has completed her two-year theriogenology residency with the Equine Reproductive Center. Catie was a pleasure to work with, and no matter the time of day or night, when a pregnant mare had a problem, she was right there.

**Dr. Abby Martin** has completed her internship with the Equine Field Service group. She will be heading to a mixed practice in Tennessee and looks forward to living close to her family again. Her smile and generosity will be missed by all those who knew her.

Thank you, Ryan, Catie, and Abby, for your years of service. We will miss you!

## Ovariectomy and Cryptorchidectomy Study

We are currently looking for horses in need of an ovariectomy or cryptorchidectomy for a clinical study at the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

We are evaluating peritoneal fluid values post-operatively. For compensation in the study, participants will receive a \$650 discount from their final bill. Horses will need to stay at the hospital for four nights (two nights more than normal). Each horse will undergo three abdominocenteses (belly taps) as part of the study.

Please contact **Dr. Katie Amend** at [Katie.Amend@colostate.edu](mailto:Katie.Amend@colostate.edu) if you would like to participate or if you have additional questions.



*Dr. Katie Amend*

## Horse Owners Warned to Watch for Signs of Pigeon Fever

With the significant spike in cases of pigeon fever over the past several weeks throughout the northern Front Range of Colorado, owners should monitor their horses and other ruminants carefully. Pigeon fever is highly contagious and can affect a horse of any age, sex, or breed, but it usually attacks young adult animals. Humans cannot catch pigeon fever, but they can spread it from horse to horse because the bacteria can be carried on shoes, clothing, hands, or barn tools.

The disease is caused by bacteria called *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*. The bacteria live in the soil and can enter your horse's body through wounds, broken skin, or mucous membranes. Research also indicates that the disease may be spread through flies, especially cattle horn flies. These are biting flies that tend to bite under the belly of the horse. The flies transmit the bacteria from horse to horse when they have been in contact with pus draining from abscesses. Bacteria in drained pus can survive up to 55 days in the environment.

### Signs of Pigeon Fever

Signs of pigeon fever can initially resemble those of other diseases such as strangles. Sometimes, the only initial signs are lameness and a reluctance to move. Other signs include fever, lethargy, and weight loss. There may also be very deep abscesses and multiple sores along the horse's chest, midline, and groin areas. Abscesses in other areas such as the back, flank, or ears have been seen, but internal abscesses are rare. Horses can be infected for several weeks before developing signs of the disease, especially abscesses.

### Treatment

Hot packs or poultices can be applied to abscesses to help the fluid collect in one concentrated area. An abscess may open on its own after a few days, or you may need to call your veterinarian to lance the abscess. Open abscesses need to drain and should be regularly flushed with saline. Your veterinarian can see the extent of disease with ultrasonographic examination and may also prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs

to control swelling and pain; sometimes, an antibiotic will be prescribed. However, **owners should not give horses antibiotics without consulting their veterinarian.** Using antibiotics before abscesses have drained may prolong the course of the disease.

Horses with the disease usually recover within a few weeks with proper treatment. If caught early and treated properly, horses usually make a complete recovery, although the disease may recur in some horses. In rare cases, the disease has been fatal.

### Prevention

Any horse showing signs of pigeon fever should be isolated to prevent spread to other animals. Areas where infected horses are held must be properly cleaned and completely disinfected.

Because the disease can be spread by flies, do your best to keep flies under control in your paddock and barn areas. The use of flysheets, fly spray, fly predators, and other pest control techniques, as well as cleaning manure, may also reduce the spread and incidence of the disease.

## Beloved 'Gypsies,' *continued from page 1*

Despite the odds, Ardan did well with the first surgery and was able to return home fully recovered. "He had a great team that took care of him," notes Charlie. "And they worked seamlessly with our regular vet, Dr. Kathy Garrison."

"The Cox family has always been such a pleasure to work with, as are each of their Irish Cobs. In addition to their support of the CSU VTH through being excellent clients, they were instrumental in helping me with a project evaluating the efficacy of a product to aid in the prevention of sand colic," says Dr. Hassel.

Yet for Ardan, this would not be the end of his colic problems. Two years later he came in with a full colon torsion and sand in his gut. Dr. Hassel, with the aid of the CSU critical care team and Dr. Jennifer Sonis, performed a second surgery. Although he initially did well, after five days of intensive care, it became clear that Ardan's bowel had been damaged beyond repair.

"Everyone gave it their best shot," remembers Charlie, a noticeably sad look passing over his face. "He had the best possible care, from everyone on his team.



*Ardan, you are missed by all who knew you.*

We tried everything and all the doctors were very willing to listen to us. And when the time came, they were able to make Ardan comfortable enough so that we could put him down at home, surrounded by his family and friends."

Despite the difficult loss of Ardan, the Coxes are thankful for the many other successes of their farm made possible with the help of CSU equine faculty, staff, and students. "The best part of working with the hospital for us has been working with the people," says Charlie.



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A close-up photograph of a horse's face, showing its eyes, nose, and mouth. The horse has a white blaze on its face and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown.

**We Love “The Ancients”**

Thanks to the quality care owners are providing, along with advances in equine veterinary medicine, horses are living longer... much longer.

The Equine Section is looking for the stories of those good old horses, 25 years of age and older, that are not only surviving but flourishing in their elder years. They are providing companionship to those who love and care for them well into their 30s.

Help us to celebrate and tell the stories of “The Ancients.” Each issue, we will pick one story to tell in honor of these old souls.

**Send your old horse’s story and attach a picture to our e-mail: [comments4equinehospital@colostate.edu](mailto:comments4equinehospital@colostate.edu)**