



President's Ponderings

HELLO HEAVY LOVERS AND WELCOME TO

August

Hi! It's August already and it will soon be spring. Looking forward to THAT!

"Taking the Leap" this month discusses how ready a person needs to be to provide a forever home for our guests. It looks at "personal suitability" and is the last topic in the series.

This month, we're kicking off our new **Horsey Health** series with a focus on Chronic Uveitis, a topic unfortunately highlighted by our very own Geronimo (Geri). Poor Geri has been struggling with an ongoing eye problem. After Dr. Em performed a nasal flush to rule out blockages and a dye test to check for ulcers (both clear), we're now heading to CSU for specialist advice on his chronic uveitis to determine our next steps.

You asked, and we listened! We recently polled our readers about adding a **Q&A column** to the Herald, and the response was a resounding "YES!" So, because we aim to please (and perhaps avoid a stampede), we're excited to announce its arrival.

Each month, we'll pick one or two burning questions – depending on the topic's complexity and its relevance to all things Heavy Horse Heaven – and provide you with an in-depth answer. Where possible, we'll even consult with an expert on the subject, so you know you're getting the straight goods.

Want to throw your hat (or question) into the ring? Simply email us at newsletter@heavyhorseheaven.com.au.

Please send one question per email, and make sure to put **"QandA"** in the subject line. We can't wait to hear what's on your mind!

save the
Date

Friday 22 August 2025
see what it's all about
on the last page.



RESCUE ROUNDUP (INS AND OUTS)

IN

We didn't have any "IN"s this July, which is actually a good thing! So we are not celebrating any new "Gotcha Days". But, despite no new faces joining us recently, today, August 1st, is technically all of our guests' birthdays!

Happy Birthday to all the horses in the Southern Hemisphere! That's right, today, August 1st, is the official birthday for every single horse down here! Yes, even if your horse was actually born in, say, a balmy March or a crisp June – they all get to blow out their candles (metaphorically, of course; real candles and horses rarely mix well) on the very same day!



Why the Universal Horse Birthday?

The August 1st universal birthday for Southern Hemisphere horses simplifies equine sports, breeding, and record-keeping.

Fair Competitions: It ensures all horses in an age group are treated equally for racing and other equestrian disciplines.

Breeding & Records: Provides a consistent system for tracking bloodlines and age milestones.

Aligns with Breeding Season: August 1st gives foals born during the spring/early summer breeding season a few months of growth before officially aging up.

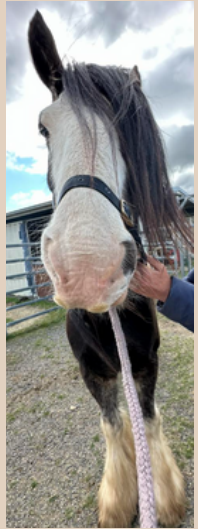
RESCUE ROUNDUP (INS AND OUTS)

OUT



Luka is a 15 yo dark bay Clydie Gelding. He came to stay in August last year. He was in need of a lot of TLC - (which of course he got). He won the hearts of the vols and very much enjoyed posing with them.

Luka



Luka has now joined Mike and Rikkie at their home which is now his. Doesn't he look pleased with himself?

OUT

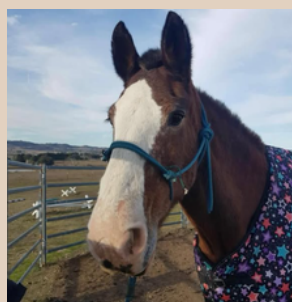
RESCUE ROUNDUP (INS AND OUTS)

Juliet



It is with profound sadness that we share the news of our beloved Juliet's passing on July 21st. You may recall from our July Herald that sweet Juliet joined us from Port Macquarie, having lost her mane and some body hair due to "itch," a condition we were confident we could ease for her. However, what we didn't know then was the full extent of her hidden suffering: a large mass on her jaw, at least three root abscesses on her front teeth, and four painful pulp exposures*.

Although she wasn't with us for long, her sweet, kind spirit left a lasting impression on all our hearts, and perhaps it was "meant to be" that she left us in July, a month sharing the very root of her beautiful name. During her dental check-up on July 21st, these multiple irreparable issues were discovered. Given the significant pain she was experiencing, we made the difficult decision to help her cross the rainbow bridge. We are incredibly grateful to Dr. Em for her compassionate care and for doing everything she could for Juliet. Vale Juliet. You were a truly beautiful soul, and we will miss you terribly.



*Pulp exposure in horses occurs when the inner, sensitive pulp of their tooth, containing nerves and blood vessels, becomes open to the oral environment. This is agonizingly painful for horses, who rely heavily on their continuously erupting teeth for grazing. The exposed pulp is immediately susceptible to bacterial infection, leading to intense inflammation and excruciating toothaches that severely impact their ability to eat. This chronic pain can manifest as reluctance to eat, dropping feed, weight loss, and even behavioural changes, ultimately progressing to painful abscesses, potentially spreading infection to the sinuses or jaw, and ultimately necessitating the costly and difficult extraction of a once vital tooth.



Moon Blindness -(or Chronic Uveitis)

You might have heard the term "moon blindness," but what does it really mean for horses? This common condition, more formally known as Equine Recurrent Uveitis (ERU) or chronic uveitis, is the leading cause of blindness in horses worldwide. It's an insidious and often painful inflammatory disease affecting the internal structures of the eye.

What is Uveitis?

Uveitis is essentially inflammation of the uveal tract, the middle layer of the eye that includes the iris (the coloured part), the ciliary body (which helps focus the eye and produce fluid), and the choroid (a vascular layer at the back of the eye). When this delicate tissue becomes inflamed, it can lead to significant discomfort and progressive damage.

Why is it Chronic and Recurrent?

While a single episode of uveitis can occur due to trauma or infection, ERU is characterised by repeated "flare-ups" of inflammation, often with periods of apparent normalcy in between. Each episode, however, contributes to cumulative damage within the eye. In many cases, ERU is considered an autoimmune disease, where the horse's own immune system mistakenly attacks its eye tissues. Certain breeds, particularly Appaloosas, are genetically predisposed to this condition.

Recognising the Signs:

During an acute flare-up, symptoms can be obvious and painful:

Squinting or holding the eye shut

Excessive tearing

Redness of the eye

Cloudiness or bluish haze over the cornea

Constricted pupil

Sensitivity to light

However, chronic uveitis can also present with more subtle, low-grade inflammation, making it harder to detect until significant damage has occurred. Long-term consequences can include cataracts, glaucoma, and even retinal detachment, leading to irreversible vision loss and severe, ongoing pain.



Moon Blindness -(or Chronic Uveitis)

Treatment and Management:

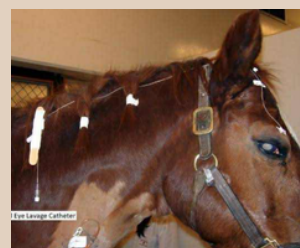
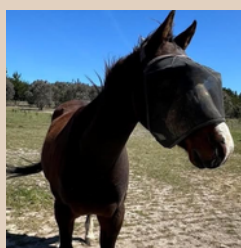
Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for ERU, but prompt and aggressive treatment is crucial to manage pain, control inflammation, and preserve vision for as long as possible. Treatment often involves a combination of topical and systemic anti-inflammatory medications. For horses with frequent or severe recurrences, surgical options like a cyclosporine implant can be considered, which slowly releases medication into the eye. In cases of intractable pain and blindness, eye removal (enucleation) may be the kindest option.

Early detection and diligent management are key to improving the quality of life for horses affected by chronic uveitis. If you notice any changes in your horse's eyes, even subtle ones, it's vital to contact your veterinarian immediately for a thorough examination.

Geronimo (aka Geri), is currently battling chronic uveitis, and is currently at the Equine Centre at Charles Sturt University. His vet, Dr. Em, referred him there after various treatments for his uncomfortable eye condition were unsuccessful. Geri handled the trip well despite the bad weather and is being a good patient.

After arriving, Geri was seen by the head clinician and underwent initial tests. A quick update from the veterinary team revealed that Geri's first set of eye cultures showed no signs of fungal or bacterial growth, which is a positive development.

To make medication delivery less stressful, Geri has been fitted with a lavage system that administers treatment directly into his eye. His pain medication has also been switched from Bute to Flunixin, which is proving to be more effective. The next step is a more in-depth eye exam under sedation on Friday to determine the best course of action. The veterinary staff is very fond of him.





A Horse's Frog

DID YOU KNOW



That's not it



That's more like it



But that's actually it

If you're new to horses, hearing "the frog" might conjure images of tiny green amphibians riding a horse. Fear not, no actual Kermits were harmed in the writing of this article.

What is it?

On a horse, the frog is a vital, wedge-shaped part on the underside of their hoof, easily spotted by its distinct "V" shape, pointing towards the toe and merging with the heel at the back. This magical, non-amphibious frog looks like a flattened pizza slice in the central part of the sole. Unlike the hard hoof wall, it's rubbery, elastic, and a bit spongy. It's like a gummy bear for absorbing shock.

What does it do?

Shock Absorption: When a horse puts its weight down, the frog bravely squishes into the ground. This absorbs impact forces, protecting sensitive bones and joints.

Blood Circulation: This little frog acts like a tiny internal pump! While the frog itself doesn't contain much blood, it assists the blood vessels in the hoof with that crucial pumping action. Every time the hoof hits the ground, the frog compresses, pushing blood up the leg. When the foot lifts, it expands, drawing fresh blood down. It's like a built-in cardiovascular workout!

Traction: That rubbery texture and wedge design give the horse fantastic grip, acting like the hoof's very own, organic mud-terrain.



A Horse's Frog

DID YOU KNOW

Protection: It stands guard, shielding the super sensitive bits inside the hoof from direct blows.

Body Awareness: Full of nerve endings, the frog is the horse's sensory feedback system, telling them if the ground is squishy or hard, helping them to adjust their stride.

A note on nerves and blood: There are very few nerves in the frog, which is why farriers can trim it without causing pain. While some online discussions debate these points, this is our understanding of its function.

A healthy frog should be plump, firm, and wide. If it's looking sad, shrunken, or smelling like a forgotten science experiment (hello, thrush!), it's time to call the farrier.

If it's not healthy:

Thrush: Pathologies like thrush can cause it to become acutely sensitive. Thrush, a common bacterial or fungal infection, breaks down the frog's tissues, leading to deep-seated inflammation and pain. This sensitivity can then result in lameness, as the horse tries to avoid weight-bearing on the affected area, impacting their comfort and movement.

Puncture Wounds/Abscesses: Any sharp object piercing the frog can introduce bacteria, leading to a painful localized infection or abscess within the sensitive frog tissue or deeper structures.

Hoof Wall Separation Disease (HWSD) / White Line Disease: While primarily affecting the hoof wall, severe cases can undermine the frog, causing it to become unhealthy, detached, and sensitive due to instability and infection spreading beneath it.



A Horse's Frog

DID YOU KNOW

Bruising: Direct impact or uneven pressure can bruise the sensitive tissues under the frog, causing immediate pain.

Navicular Syndrome/Disease: This complex condition primarily affects the navicular bone and surrounding structures, but often manifests as heel pain, making the frog area sensitive to pressure.

Laminitis: In severe cases of laminitis, the sensitive laminae connecting the hoof wall to the coffin bone can be damaged, leading to instability and often pain in the frog and heel region as weight bearing shifts.

Our very own Farrier Fabuloso, Matt, knows just what to do.

A happy frog means a happy, sound, and much less-likely-to-trip horse!

Taking the Leap

Are you personally ready?

Bringing a rescued horse into your life is a profound commitment that extends far beyond providing feed and shelter.

From a personal suitability perspective, it demands a unique blend of experience, physical capability, and emotional readiness. Giving a forever home to a horse, particularly one that has faced hardship, requires a deep introspection into who you are and what you can truly offer.

Do you have the experience, the wisdom to understand and the skills to nurture? While a lifelong background with horses is certainly beneficial, it's not always about years in the saddle. What's crucial is a solid understanding of equine behaviour and basic horse care principles.

- Have you handled horses in various situations?
- Do you recognise signs of stress, pain, or fear in a horse?

Rescued horses often carry emotional baggage from past neglect or trauma, which can manifest as behavioural challenges. Your experience should equip you with the patience and insight to approach these issues with sensitivity, rather than resorting to force or misunderstanding. This might involve experience with natural horsemanship, positive reinforcement, or simply a deep-seated respect for the equine mind. A willingness to learn and adapt, perhaps by seeking guidance from experienced horse rehabilitation specialists, is as vital as any prior knowledge.

Taking the Leap

Your Physical Capabilities The Strength to Support, the Stamina to Sustain

Caring for a horse is inherently physical. From mucking out stables and lifting heavy feed bags to leading an unsure animal and dealing with unexpected situations, a certain level of physical fitness and resilience is non-negotiable. You need the stamina for daily chores, the strength to handle a strong animal (especially one that might be flighty or unhandled), and the agility to react quickly in an emergency. This isn't about being an Olympic athlete, but rather possessing the sustained energy and bodily capacity to consistently meet the demands of horse care. Consider your ability to withstand varying weather conditions, perform repetitive tasks, and recover from the inevitable bumps and scrapes that come with working with large animals.

Your Emotional Readiness The Patience to Heal, the Love to Last
Perhaps the most critical, yet often overlooked, aspect is your emotional readiness. Rescued horses can be a rollercoaster of emotions. They may be withdrawn, fearful, or even aggressive initially. Giving a forever home means embracing their past, understanding that healing takes time, and celebrating every tiny step forward.

You need unwavering patience – for slow progress, for setbacks, and for a horse that might take months or even years to fully trust. Empathy and compassion are paramount, allowing you to connect with an animal that may have known little kindness. You must be prepared for the emotional demands of witnessing their vulnerability and working through their fears.

Crucially, you need emotional resilience to not take their reactions personally and to remain consistent in your care, even when it feels challenging. The true reward lies in seeing a broken spirit blossom under your patient, loving guidance, and that requires a truly ready heart.



The Volunteers
hard at “work”,
Sunday
13/07/2025





READER PUZZLE

1. What is the name of the famous black stallion featured in the “Black Beauty” novel?
2. In J.R.R. Tolkien's “The Lord of the Rings”, what is the name of the proud and intelligent horse ridden by Gandalf?
3. What breed of horse is Black Beauty in Anna Sewell's classic novel of the same name? While not explicitly stated, he is implied to be a fine example of what general type of horse?
4. In Homer's “The Iliad”, what is the name of the winged immortal horse belonging to Poseidon that fathers two swift horses for the Trojan prince Aeneas?
5. What is the name of the beloved pony in Anna Sewell's “Black Beauty” who is sold early in the story due to his mistress's illness?
6. In Walter Farley's “The Black Stallion” series, what is the name given to the wild Arabian stallion found by Alec Ramsay on a deserted island?
7. What is the title of the poem by Alfred Noyes that tells the story of a ghostly rider and his ill-fated journey?
8. In C.S. Lewis's “The Chronicles of Narnia: The Horse and His Boy”, what is the name of the talking horse who escapes from Calormen with Aravis?
9. What is the name of Don Quixote's aging and rather unimpressive horse in Miguel de Cervantes's novel “Don Quixote”?
10. In John Steinbeck's novella “The Red Pony”, what is the name of the first pony that Jody Tiflin receives?
11. What mythical creature, often depicted with the body and legs of a horse and a single horn on its forehead, is a popular figure in literature?
12. In Rudyard Kipling's short story “The Brushwood Boy”, what is the name of the protagonist's beloved childhood pony in his imaginary world?



READER PUZZLE Continued

13. What is the name of the war-horse belonging to the title character in Michael Morpurgo's novel "War Horse"?
14. In T.H. White's "The Once and Future King", what is the name of King Pellinore's perpetually lost questing beast, often described as having the head of a serpent, the body of a leopard, the haunches of a lion, and the feet of a hart, and making a baying sound like thirty couple of hounds?
15. What is the name of the stable boy who befriends Black Beauty and is known for his gentle nature?
16. In Cormac McCarthy's "All the Pretty Horses", what is the name of John Grady Cole's beloved mare?
17. In Greek mythology, what hero is most famously associated with riding the winged horse Pegasus?
18. In Norse mythology, what is the name of Odin's eight-legged horse, known for its incredible speed?
19. In Greek mythology, what creatures were depicted as having the head, arms, and torso of a human and the body and legs of a horse?
20. According to Greek myth, what powerful god of the sea and earthquakes is also associated with horses and is said to have created them?

LAST MONTH'S READER PUZZLE SOLUTION

1. What is the term for a baby horse of either sex?

Foal (or cutie or sweet thing or ooooh look at yooou!)

2. What unit is commonly used to measure the height of a horse?

Hand

3. What is the name for a female horse that is four years old or older?

Mare (or cutie or sweet thing or ooooh look at yooou!)

4. What is the name for a male horse that has not been castrated and is four years old or older?

Stallion (or cutie or sweet thing or oh you know!)

5. What do horses primarily eat?

Grass and hay (Not pizza, chocolate or scones)

6. What is the name of the small, sturdy breed of horse often associated with coal mines?

Shetland Pony

7. What breed of horse is famous for its distinctive spotted coat?

Appaloosa

8. What type of horse is specifically bred for racing at a gallop over short distances?

Quarter Horse (would accept ½ of ½ horse)

9. Name a breed of horse known for its elegance and high-stepping gait, often seen in dressage.

Would accept, Friesians, Andalusians, Lusitanos or Warmbloods (though some are more "high-stepping than others)

10. What large breed of horse was historically used for pulling heavy loads and farm work?

Draught horse (including Clydesdale, Percheron, Belgian, Australian and other Draught Horses)

LAST MONTH'S READER PUZZLE SOLUTION Continued

11. How many teeth does a mature adult male horse typically have?

40 to 44.

- **Incisors (12 total):**
- **Canines (0-4 total):** Most mature male horses (stallions and geldings) have four canine teeth (also called "tushes" or "bridle teeth")
- **Premolars (12-16 total):** There are generally 12 premolars. However, some horses may also have wolf teeth (0-4 total).
- **Molars (12 total)**

12. What is the sensitive, fleshy part at the back of a horse's foot?

Frog

13. What is the name of the long bone in a horse's lower leg, between the knee and the fetlock?

Cannon bone (or metacarpal/metatarsal III)

14. Horses are herbivores. What does this term mean?

They are plant-eating animals. (There isn't a term for pizza, chocolate and scone-eating animals)

15. What is the average gestation period for a mare? **Approximately 11 months (between 10 and 12 months)**

16. What is the name of the equestrian sport where horse and rider perform a series of precise movements from memory? **Dressage**

17. In show jumping, what are the obstacles called that horses must jump over?

Fences or jumps

18. What is the term for riding a horse without a saddle?

Bareback riding

LAST MONTH'S READER PUZZLE SOLUTION Continued

19. What is the name of the event that combines dressage, cross-country, and show jumping?

Eventing (or Combined Training)

20. What is the sport of racing horses while riding in a lightweight, two-wheeled cart?

Harness racing

September Submissions including Q and A

If you would like to have something included in the September issue of Hoofbeat Herald, please submit by Thursday 28th August 2025 via
newsletter@heavyhorseheaven.com.au



Where their new life begins

TRIVIA TIME

Friday 22 August 2025

**Doors opening 5:30 pm - Dinner
6:30 pm - 9:30 pm - Trivia**

Theme: Wear a Wig

Old Canberra Inn

195 Mouat Street
Lyneham ACT

*Come get your trivia on like you have never trivia'd before!!
Join us for a fun-filled night where we hope to raise enough
money for HHH winter feed and hay!*

Tickets \$25:00 + \$2.78 (booking fee)

Buy Tickets

**Disclaimer - Wear your
Depends. This is ramping
up to be a hilarious trivia
night like no other!**

**Not into trivia - come
along anyway and get
your silent auction on. We
guarantee a good time!**

Can't come to trivia but want to help?

**Donate
Here**

**Special thanks to OCI for
co-hosting the event and providing free
parking across the street!**

