



Back in the Saddle

By John Beckett
Camelot Student

My motto has always been, “you can only win the prize if you get back on the horse.”

After my stroke, I never thought I’d be able to see the world from the back of a horse again. Losing the ability to be with my beloved horse, feeling our bond, and seeing the world between my horses ears was a view I cherished and missed. Camelot has given me that opportunity again.

Finding Camelot has been, and still is, the biggest step in my continuing rehabilitation. There is nothing quite as rewarding as finding myself in a saddle and bonding with a horse again. Especially when the

two of us become one, maneuvering through the courses at Camelot.

The biggest lesson I had to learn was trust; trust in knowing that ultimately I am the one in control of the success or failure of those caring for me. I had to learn to trust in my coaches, volunteers and horse. Even though my spirit beams free and peaceful when I’m in the saddle, I had to

learn to trust a horse carrying me again. I also had to learn to trust being a part of a working team. It’s different than being a part of a competitive team. The goal is not about winning points, but controlling myself and my mount. I relearned to use my body to send subtle cues to my mount, and from that I relearned how to balance my mind and body in everyday things I took for granted, like standing and brushing my teeth.



photo: Mary Hadsall

John riding Scout in the outdoor arena with volunteer Phil Simpson.

Being back in saddle and having a surefooted horse to carry me, as well as the little successes that come along with it, brings a smile to my face. But ultimately, it’s trusting the professionals at Camelot who bring me energy by connecting with me. They handle me gently, laugh with me, make direct eye contact, and speak to me calmly, allowing me the skills of interacting with the external world again. ∞

Merlin's Muse

By Mary Hadsall
Executive Director

Aristotle said, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." His words are proven daily at the Kingdom of Camelot. The synergy and support received here has created a wave engulfing the entire property in growth and transformation. There are so many wonderful things happening at the ranch, I must pause to let it all soak in. Now is the time to stop and smell the roses.

Camelot has always flourished because of the remarkable people behind her. The tireless energy of our volunteers is truly astounding—individuals that together make the whole, well, a whole lot better!

Spring has sprung and the cleaning and polishing has begun. We are sparkling with fresh paint, enjoying the spring of our step, and roll of our wheels, on brand new carpet and have even installed new ceiling tiles. Camelot is beautiful, literally, from top to bottom.

Outside, the desert flowers are exploding with color. Our property trails have been pruned and cleaned, and even the chicken coop has had a face lift. We have a beautiful refurbished duck pond for our resident chickens and ducks to enjoy. It's the perfect "welcome home" for our newest ducklings, Corbin, Taylor, and Chandler. The projects have been numerous and the shine around here continues to grow.

Out in the barn, Camelot students are working hard on their riding lessons and curriculum. The volunteers cheer them on as they learn new patterns and skills. The horses are shedding like crazy. Their fresh summer coats glisten in the sun from the daily grooming. Rising like a Phoenix from the ashes are two glorious flower stalks from our Enchanted Garden's *Agave americana*, more commonly known as century plants. I do believe you could hear the long stalks creaking as they visibly grow daily, if the trills and whistles of the hundreds of songbirds weren't so loud. There truly is nothing like Camelot in the spring.

The whole that makes up Camelot is awe inspiring. The synergy here is gaining momentum as fast as the sprouting flower stalks in our garden. Take the time to reap the rewards. This growth and beauty is because of each of you. Now, like never before, enjoy this Kingdom that we call Camelot. Claim it as yours! ∞



In Memory Of

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Wedding party (left to right) Sharon, Tallulah, Tucker (guest dog in foreground), Jessica, Gill, Josephine, Griffin, Lynne, Lily, Mary, Reeky, Hannah and Ellie.

Wedding Barks Ring

By Mary Hadsall
Mother of the Bride

Lily Hadsall-Klein of Scottsdale, AZ, and Griffin Door of Rio Verde, AZ, were joined as fur ever friends in holy mutt-ramony at Camelot on February 20, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Ms. Josephine Joseph of Phoenix, AZ, officiated.

The couple joined paws under blue skies in the beautiful outdoor dressage arena. With blessings and laughter, the two committed to lifelong friendship and love.

The bride, escorted by her mother, Mary Hadsall, was resplendent in her floor length white gown of chiffon and taffeta. She carried a small bouquet of white daisies and wild flowers. The bridegroom, accompanied by his mother, Lynne LoCascio, was dashing in his formal tails.

Ellie Brisso-Behinfar, a beautiful Miniature Poodle, was maid of honor; Reeky Brisso-Behinfar, a long haired Chihuahua, was the flower boy. He was brought down the rose petal strewn aisle in cart pulled by Tallulah Phillips, a Bernese Mountain Dog. Gill Sterling, an Australian Kelpie, stood up as best man.

In lieu of a honeymoon, the couple romped and played in true lover pup fashion, as they will for all their days to come! The happy couple had requested no gifts, but rather, donations to be made to their favorite charity, Camelot. ∞

Nifty Bits News from the Ranch

Welcome new students: **Deyana J. and Heather S.**

Welcome to our newest volunteers: **Melissa B. and Kim J.** It's awesome to have **Cate C.** back in the barn. We have missed your beautiful smile! Hurry back, **Michele and Lauren S.**

Camelot is proud to announce two new board members, **Ginger Barry and Bill Vale.** We are fortunate to have your support.

We are grateful beyond words for the fresh coat of paint indoors and out. Thank you, **Jim Draper,** for this beautiful improvement. The

facility is sparkling and everyone is so appreciative!

A super special thanks to **Anthony Behinfar,** from Lily and Griffin, for being the videographer for the wedding of the century!

Camelot is fortunate to be on the Boy Scouts of America's radar this year! Thanks to their hard work and team building skills, we now have several additions to the ranch. Thanks to **Michael C.** with Troop 41, beautiful river rock now defines our outdoor dressage arena. And thanks to **Corbin M.** of Troop 631, our property trails received a hearty pruning and the duck pond was refurbished.

Kristina leading Scout ridden by volunteer Alicia Draper.



Welcome, Kristina!
By Mary Hadsall,
Executive Director

Camelot is proud to announce the appointment of Kristina Vahe as our newest riding instructor! Kristina came to Camelot last May, bringing her horsemanship skills and riding talents to the barn. She lent a hand throughout our long hot summer exercising Frisco, Ashley and Barbara. When fall came, I was pleased to offer this Meridith Manor International Equestrian Centre graduate a position, which would bring her instructional talents to the Camelot arena, too. Students and volunteers alike are enjoying her enthusiasm and joyful laughter. Welcome aboard, Ms. Vahe! ∞



Camelot's Enchanted Garden is growing and flourishing thanks to the hard work and generous contribution of **Judy and Hannah Brisso.** Well done ladies!

To our major donors, deepest gratitude & heartfelt thanks: **Ames Construction, AQHA Foundation, Cave Creek Charities, Eric Crown, Davignon Charitable Fund, Joyce and Ed Goljan, Phil Hagenah, Harold's Corral, Knights of Columbus Council 11116 and 13286, Bernie Little, Shirley A. Lowman, Harrison Moore, Jack and Paula Strickstein, Bonnie and John Trowbridge, Verdoorn Foundation and Leslie Zelisko.**

Starchief Brave Eagle, a.k.a. Coughdrop

4/17/1992 - 12/30/2015

By Mary Hadsall, Executive Director



photo: Mary Wales Long

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Our little man was laid to rest at the end of December following a sudden illness. During his remarkable lifetime, Coughdrop accomplished many things. In his younger years, he was a member of the Petite Elite Drill Team and the AZ Mini Mystique Precision Driving Team. When not hoofing it up, he could often be found behind his “typewriter” where he shared his thoughts through his passion for writing. His first article appeared in the newsletters for TEACH (Therapeutic Equine Academy for Children in Eloy, AZ) back in 2005. He then went on to freelance for the *Bridle and Bit* from 2007–2009. When he joined the Camelot therapy herd in 2012, he resumed his love of writing and had his own column in the *Camelot Chronicles*.

Those of us who loved him and cared for him daily know he would like to be best remembered for his sense of humor and ability to outsmart the volunteers. His favorite activity was playing Houdini, and nothing brought him more joy than slipping out of his stall or the pastures.

What I will remember most was his quiet way of teaching everyone who met him about overcoming obstacles and living life to its fullest. He never let his disability slow him down; he showed others how to do the same.

The “little man with the giant heart” is how Coughdrop will always be remembered. ∞

A Heroes' Hero ~ Rico Francisco

By Hannah Brisso,

Volunteer Coordinator, Barn Manager
and Principal Riding Instructor

Rico joined the Camelot volunteer crew in October of 2013. Since then, he has been a regular on Wednesday mornings in the barn and Thursday afternoons with the students. According to Thursday student Lynne LoCasio, "Rico is a shining star; he is a knight in shining armor. He is always there, we were lucky when we got him." Rico comes by it naturally, as his father started the M-Bar-C Ranch in Freeland, WA, on Whidbey Island, where Rico served on the board of trustees for the the Forgotten Children's Fund. Incorporating the joy and celebration of success begun by his father, Rico regaled Thursday students with a short ceremony honoring their bravery, moving staff and volunteers to tears. In his spare time, Rico enjoys golf, hiking and spending time with his wife Ann Marie and yellow labrador retriever, Desi.

∞



photo: Mary Hadsall

Halie B. rides Cayanna in the arena while being led by Rico Francisco. Sharon Phillips, a volunteer, side-walks.