



Auction Success- Casanova Saved from Slaughter

On February 1st, Cowgirl Spirit arrived at the Enumclaw Livestock Pavilion for the monthly horse auction. As always, we hoped to help a horse in need and fill one of the spots on our rescue drill team.



Casanova looks on from his pen at the Enumclaw Livestock Auction, 2/1/09

Casanova, an 8 year old grey Half-Arabian, appeared to fit our requirements perfectly. This gentle gelding was 150 lbs. underweight, wormy and overdue for a hoof trim, we were eager to improve the lifestyle he was accustomed to and see what kind of diamond he would turn out to be!

This new rescue is an extremely kind, quiet and cautious guy. While he has settled into his place in our herd, he seems unable to believe his good fortune- you can see the gratitude in his eyes. We have already had his hooves trimmed and have started him on a high quality diet so that he can quickly gain weight. It will be a couple weeks before we assess his training level (after all vetting and initial care is complete), but we are hopeful that his quiet de-

meanor will be visible under saddle as well.

We were approached by his previous owner at the auction and were informed that Casanova had been used as a "Mexican Dancing Horse." Having never worked with a horse with this kind of training, we are eager to see what he knows.

Casanova will be seen by our vet soon for a vet check - including shots, teeth and a full assessment. If you'd like to come out and meet Casanova or any of our other rescues, please contact us at team@csrddt.org!



Enjoying some much needed hay, Casanova relaxes in his new paddock at the CSRDT Headquarters, 2/2/09

Solving Dollar's Chronic Lameness Mystery

Cowgirl Spirit's most lovable rescue, Dollar, has been chronically lame since he arrived in September, 2008. We have had Dr. Hannah Evergreen out to see him twice and both times she has performed nerve blocks on his front left heel, which made him 90% sound. She has also given him full bodywork chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture. We have gotten digital x-rays which have shown navigular changes, a bad sign.

We took Dollar to Mission Farrier School where Mark Plumlee, a Certified Journeyman Farrier, Registered Journeyman Farrier and clinician, assessed Dollar's lameness, then applied natural balance

shoes along with EquiPack therapeutic material to help make Dollar more comfortable. Dollar has continued to be lame, with no real improvement in his condition. We are looking into other options to help him become sound enough for at least light riding. This is a horse who wants a job!



Dollar tries out his new shoes while at Mission Farrier School, 1/26/08

Our next step is to work with our farrier to try either wedge pads on Dollar's front hooves, or the Double Nail Pad system. We are also looking into taking Dollar to WSU for an evaluation, and possible MRI by Dr. Schneider. However, we will need to raise some funds in order to take this step!

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PRACTICES START!

We have started preparing for the 2009 competition season! Practices are held at noon each

Saturday at the Fall City Arena. If you are interested in performing with our rescue horses, just come to one of our practices! We are now accepting new members for this year's competition season and we'd love to have you be a part of our team! No experience required- if you're dependable and committed to horses we have a place for you! E-mail questions about

membership to us at team@csrddt.org
JOIN US TODAY!

NEED A TIP?

Have a training question you'd like the Cowgirl Spirit team to answer? Submit one at team@csrddt.org and it may be featured in our next newsletter!



Grace & Casper attend the Quicksilver Drill Clinic

On January 31st, Cowgirl Spirit rescue horses, Grace & Casper, attended the annual Quicksilver Drill Clinic in Vancouver, Washington, with High Valley Riders' drill advisor, Kurt Browning. This was the first time for both mares to attend a large event in a new arena and the first time either has spent the night away from their herd!

Grace, in particular, was especially well behaved considering that this was her first time doing any drill maneuvers, let alone with horses she did not know! She very quickly realized how to move with the herd of horses and was secure in her position as strange, unknown horses bumped into her. Grace has a great work ethic and was happy to walk, trot and canter in each of the maneuvers we worked on.

Casper, on the other hand, exhibited mare-ish behaviors when horses came too close to her or unintentionally bumped into her. Her rider was quick to discipline her, reminding



Casper is used as an example as Kurt Browning explains a maneuver by pairs

her that such behavior was inappropriate for the sport of drill. By the end of the clinic, Casper was a pro as she moved through the exercises at a canter. At one point, she even led and entire team sweep of more than 12 horses.

We are extremely grateful to be able to attend this training clinic. Both of these mares are going to be highly desired at the end of the season when they are available for adoption!



Grace learns social skills as she executes her first company front, 1/31/09

Cowgirl Spirit's Volunteers!

Cowgirl Spirit's success is hugely attributed to our strong volunteer base. We are extremely lucky to have a wonderful group of men and women that come out on a regular basis to help with the care of our rescues. They are always glad to pitch in wherever necessary, from unloading and stacking tons of hay, to cleaning paddocks and even fixing fencing.

We marvel at their commitment and the obvious affection that they feel for each of the rescues. Many of our volunteers will choose to spend extra time grooming and talking to each of the horses, often time picking a favorite horse who receives extra doting and attention. It is impossible to quantify the value of extra attention for these horses- many have suffered abuse and abandonment and learning to bond with humans is extremely valuable as we work to train the horses to be adoptable riding companions.

Do you want to spend time with horses? Are you someone who hasn't ridden in years, or has always wanted to work with horses? Cowgirl Spirit could be a great opportunity for you! There are many volunteer roles in our organization- from stall cleaning to exercising horses, working at booths and helping fundraise. Whether you can dedicate a lot of time or just occasional, we'd love to have you join the Cowgirl Spirit family!



Class and **Cassidy** bond as they take a stroll along the beach.



Noah & Emily help member, **Ally**, finish cleaning paddocks. Our horses have plenty of needs and can never get enough one-on-one attention! If you'd like to volunteer with us and help make a difference in the lives of our rescues, please contact us team@csrdt.org! We'd love to hear from you, and so would our horses!

Show your Cowgirl Spirit pride! Our online store has tees, tanks, sweatshirts, and gifts at our CafePress store:

www.cafepress.com/cowgirlspirit



Cowgirl Spirit's Training Tip of the Month: Trailer Loading

In late winter, everyone seems to come down with a case of cabin fever; we all can't wait to get outside and enjoy the sunshine with our beloved horse friends! Most often, those plans involve trailering, and unfortunately, horses are not born knowing how to trailer. Whether it be to shows, trails, or even to the emergency vet, trailer loading is an essential skill all horses must learn and keep. Use these bleak winter months to set you and your horse up for success when you are ready to leave your property.

One of the first and most important skills our rescue horses must learn is how to trailer load. Often times, these horses have had little to no exposure to traveling. In order to become performing members of our drill team, this is a skill they must learn, and quickly!

Here are some tips for teaching your horse how to load reliably each time:

Time: The absolute worst time to teach a horse how to load is on the day you need to travel. The best time to teach is when the pressure is off. Give yourself and your horse time to learn. Spanning the training over a few weeks or even months (for the difficult cases) is a great strategy.

Attitude: You must always remain relaxed and matter-of-fact. Horses perceive rushing and stress as danger- thus will often not load when we're in a hurry and feeling anxious. Keep an even keel, and a positive attitude. You are trying to help your horse learn a new skill!

Preparation: Before asking your horse to step into a small, dark tin box, it is advisable to ensure he has certain skills. He must know how to lead, that is, respond to forward pressure on a lead rope. A horse who pulls against such pressure is not a horse who should attempt loading! In addition, establishing a "go forward" cue is important. This can be as simple as a cluck and tap with a dressage whip, but the horse must go forward when asked.

Imagination: A trailer looks like a trailer only to us humans. For horses, it can be a very scary object. In order to prepare them for the experience, test his leading and "go forward" skills by asking him to do so in many different situations. For example, ask him to step over a log. Or through a trail car wash, or over a bridge. You can set up obstacles that will help desensitize your horse and prepare him for the noises and feelings he'll experience in the trailer.

Size: If possible, try to teach how to load in an open, large, airy trailer. As you continue to train this skill, you can move to smaller trailers. The goal is always to get a horse to go where you put him, but it does help to start big and gradually reduce the trailer size. Teaching a horse how to load into a small straight-load is much more challenging than getting him into a large stock trailer. Use the tools you have, but take your trailer's size into consideration.



Cowgirl Spirit rescue, Class, shows how to load into a horse trailer with her handler at her side.



Class is loaded into the horse trailer by 'sending' in the direction desired.



Class is asked to load while her handler stands in the trailer ahead of her.

Footings: A slippery, wet trailer floor is dangerous and scary for first time loaders. Keep the floor of the trailer clean and bedded. Also, the footing outside of the trailer is equally as important. Be sure to park where it is level, with safe footing. If on an incline, make sure it is still safe and that the horse doesn't have to step too high to get into the trailer.

Small Pieces: Breaking things down into small increments of learning will ensure success. Think of it like a child learning how to read. First the alphabet, then small words, then phrases, then sentences, and so on. Once you feel adequately prepared, you can begin by having a nervous horse just stand near the trailer. Don't skip steps. Make sure they can stand and face directly into the trailer. Then ask for one hoof. Be sure to reward the try, by giving them a break. With enough small increments broken apart over several days/weeks/months, your horse's experience will remain positive. Soon your horse will be able to stand in the trailer in a relaxed manner. Never try to pull a horse into a trailer- it doesn't ever work. For help, please schedule lessons with a competent, experienced trainer. Never try to load a horse on your own for the first time.

The Friend Factor: Some horses respond positively to having experienced horses load before them. At Cowgirl Spirit, we often load our experienced horses first, and have the green ones follow on. Because they are taught as a herd, they tend to follow their leaders. In addition, having an extra human hand to hold a loose door, or treats, is also very useful!

Food: It is a good idea for the first time and troubled loaders to be rewarded with food once in the trailer. This can be as simple as a hay net filled with fresh hay.

Never try to bribe a horse into a trailer- it is dangerous and rarely has positive, lasting effects.

Equipment: Be absolutely certain that your trailer is in proper shape for supporting a horse. Weak floor boards, and ripped metal are not only dangerous, but can also scare horses.

Drive Safely & Respectfully: Once in the trailer, remember that you need to travel slower with greater stopping distances. Make sure your tow vehicle is in good shape and can handle stopping the load behind it. Some horses are reluctant to load simply because they have experienced rough rides. So, be respectful!

Best of luck! Remember, it is always safer and quicker to work with a knowledgeable, qualified trainer. If you run into problems loading your horse, it is best for the both of you to get help from a qualified trainer.

Happy Travels!

Feel the Spirit...

Keep on Riding

Subscribe to Cowgirl Spirit's
monthly newsletter and have a
copy mailed directly to your home!



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CSRDT would like to extend a grateful "Thank You" to the following people & businesses.

We could not do this without your generous support and donations.

Blue Hill, LLC	Horse Haven	Jon Ensign
Grange Supply	Hannah Evergreen	Four Gables Farm
Tracey's Clothesline	Barnes Family Foundation	Barb Ketzal
Images Plus	Janis D. Pease	Associated Estates Realty
Bothell Feed	Stuart M. Frank	Mission Farrier School

Save a Horse, Buy a Valentine's Day Rose Bouquet!



This Valentine's Day, Cowgirl Spirit members will be raising funds for our rescue horses by selling beautiful red rose bouquets! Our rose station will be located at the corner of Redmond Fall City Road Hwy 202 and Sahalee Way NE from 9am until 3pm, unless we sell our earlier!

We will have plenty of arrangement selections for you to choose from, including vases, cards and adorable balloons to stick into your flower bouquet! Be sure to keep an eye out for us—we may even have one of our rescue horses there to help us gain attention and to show of the wonderful work that we do!

Pele Learns How To Jump!

Our rescue, Pele, has turned into one of the team's favorite horses to ride at each of our drill practices. However, at a stocky 17.3 hands tall, he doesn't quite fit the ideal standard for an equestrian drill team athlete. While we have continued to introduce him to the sport of drill, it quickly became apparent that he would benefit the most from learning new skills that would make him more desirable for a prospective adopter.

At one of our weekly Saturday drill practices in January, Cowgirl Spirit volunteer, Morgan, introduced Pele to trot poles and cross rails. Once he learned to reliably pick up his feet, he seemed to enjoy the idea of jumping and was quickly popping over small obstacles.

Although very large in stature, Pele is extremely agile and athletic. He easily maneuvers through circles, bends and roll backs at the walk, trot and canter! This boy loves to work and has a wonderful personality. We'd love to see him adopted to a home that will use him to his full potential! Are you the home for this gentle giant?



Pele takes a break from his jumping lesson, 1/24/09.

Cowgirl Spirit's 2009 Competition Schedule

Be sure to mark our competition schedule on your calendar! We enjoy meeting our supporters and fans and love to show off our rescues!!

5/3/09	Show N Shine	Salkum, WA
5/23/09	Quicksilver Spring Classic	Vancouver, WA
6/6/09	CC Riders Annual Competition	Salkum, WA
6/27-28/09	PNWDTA Competition	Albany, OR
7/17-19/09	WLRC State Competition	Spanaway, WA