

Hosses

First there were Pete's horses that often grazed on the "Old House" lawn. Could the attraction have been those apples with which Sr. Syra rewarded their friendliness? Well, the threesome became such fast friends that the two four-leggers began knocking on our front door every day. If no one appeared, they ambled around to the back porch. Still no answer? Well, then the disappointed beggars would push around the contents of the porch floor, stomping and huffing until their "waitress" appeared with their fruity order. Spoiled, but sociable creatures, those hosses!

The mares even liked attending our occasional outdoor Masses, and were usually quite reverent, but one time they acted miffed -- possibly because they had not been asked to take up the Offertory gifts (of apples?). So they took to snorting out the Mass candles -- over and over again. Finally our country friend, Hazel, went over to the picnic table, took a big bite of leftover watermelon and fired away at the startled sniffers. It took several rounds of seed-ammunition to effect the invaders' retreat so that Hazel could devoutly return to her folding-chair pew and Mass could continue.

We sure missed our equine friends when Peace Place moved to its new location. So, to the rescue came Mr. Bryant who brought two of his mares for us to enjoy there until winter. All was peachy-creamy until two of our teenagers slipped away to the pasture and tried to ride them. Their mounts were not ready to be ridden, and despite the girls' claims of expert horsemanship, these kids had never really been around horses before. Fortunately, no serious problems resulted, but foreseeing the futility of future attempts to assure kid and horse safety, we decided to keep our pastures horseless for at

least a couple of years.

But then, who could resist the offer made some time later by the Knoxville Zoo to have Peace Place board one of their *miniature* horses?! Their vets explained that “Tennessee” had a history of seizures and efforts to breed her had been unsuccessful, but she had a good disposition and liked children; maybe she would do better at a pet farm. At our enthusiastic response, arrangements for her delivery here were made.

Tennessee was short but strong, and very patient with young riders. Her docs explained about the seizures and gave directions about her care, then left with the promise to make “barn-calls” every so often to check on the little horse’s adjustment

The new queen of the pasture worked out very well and showed no signs of further seizures. And the visiting vets were proud to give a report of excellent progress in their patient’s health and happiness! In fact, the zoo decided to just leave the miniature mare with us indefinitely, but continue to check up on her every once in a while.

A couple of years later, friend Mr. Bailey asked if he could try breeding his Sicilian donkey to our miniature horse. So Tennessee, accompanied by two sheep pals, moved to the donkey’s digs. Too bad, no luck., no offspring on the way, but suitor and “suitee” became such close friends, that we just had to make the sacrifice of leaving our mare horse with her caring donkey companion at the Bailey farm. (Yes, we did take back our sheep -- after we witnessed one young man rolling his eyes at them while declaring how much he loved mutton!)

Even after equines no longer lived at Peace Place, they continued to fascinate us, and any chance to visit them was special. Frequent walks through the area brought our horse neighbors running up to the fences in anticipation of a bit of TLC including

AND THEY ALL GET ALONG
By Carol Stiefvater, OSF

sometimes-treats. Our young petters and their petees happily bonded.

But the chance to mount a horse was rare, and when one of our good horse-raising friends called one lucky day offering a ride-deal, we listened! Sure. Reward for a good job? Horseback riding! You bet! Outcome? Great job, great ride, great kids.