

# The Colonial Williamsburg Animal News

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## BULL BORN AT C. W.

Alice, formerly a heifer, officially became a cow midday Monday, January 23, when she gave birth to a spunky bull calf.

Elaine Shirley, midcow, assisted the first time mother. The calf will be registered as "Henry Wetherburn."



## NEW HORSES MAKE LONG JOURNEY

By Karen V. Smith

January 4, 1989 at 6:00 p.m. seven weary horses were unloaded off a trailer at our stable. After twenty-one hours straight on the road they were tired. Their journey started in Sterling, Ill., continued to Lanark, Ill., Sheboygan, Wis., and last stop Williamsburg, Va.

Mr. Paul Simson, with the help of his brother Bill hauled the horses for us. Three of the horses we purchased were from Mr. Simson. Dick and Dolly are Belgians, a breed of draft horse. Both are rich chestnut with blond manes and tails. Dick has a white stripe down his face. Their ages are eight and ten, and they are about 15.3 hands high (one hand is 4 inches). We also purchased from Mr. Simson a Morgan/Quarter Horse cross which we have named Jolly Roger after a famous 18th-century race horse. Roger is a liver chestnut with a white blaze and two stockings in the rear. He is around 14.3 hands and about 10 years old. He will pull the cart.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Eads sold us three American Creams. We have named the two mares Mary Margaret and Jane Hunter. The six month old colt is named Moses. Mary is two years old, Jane four, and both are around 14.1 hands. Jane is pregnant and due to foal in April or May. These horses need a little T.L.C. The Eads have been ill for sometime and unable to care for them the way they would have liked to.

Mr. and Mrs. Walcyak have generously donated an American Cream which we have named Silver-smith. He is three years old, 17 hands and very friendly.

None of the Creams have been registered, so we will have all four (soon to be five) registered as soon as the paper work can be done.

## REORGANIZATION OF OXEN

Waylon, after being treated for more than a year and a half for a thyroid disorder and suffering worsening illness has been humanely destroyed.

Top and Willie have therefore begun a new working relationship. You have probably seen them giving rides already. First they had to learn to work together, being both trained to work on the same side. Willie learned his new position very quickly in spite of doubt by other oxmen outside C.W. As they walk by you next time, notice how well they step together.

## TOPSY AND PRINCE ON T.L.O

Topsy and Prince, our white socked Percherons who are without a doubt our best pair of horses, are taking a well-deserved winter break at Carter's Grove.

Topsy is still mulling over the survey feedback results and is determined that things will change. Although the personal changes she will have to make will hurt—and she will have to be reminded periodically to maintain them—she knows it must happen or she may as well stay out in the pasture.



## IXNAY ON THE OODIESGAY

Visitors see our horses in their pastures and they just can't resist feeding the "poor babies" a goodie. Most people who see our horses out in a pasture or paddock have no idea at all what they are looking at. What is there in the pasture are healthy animals eating what is good for them—grass or hay. What they see we can only imagine, but it must be something like this: Deprived pitiful beasts whose only chance for happiness lies in a bag of cookies. Oh the poor, poor horsies.

One visitors, when gently discouraged by a staff member to not feed the horses, got indignant and wanted to know if the staff member didn't like to have a little ice cream now and then. The staff member replied, with a smile, that 30,000 scoops of ice cream, or 50,000 cookies a week was bad for her health and that she didn't accept candy from strangers anyway, and wouldn't even think of offering bits of food to a stranger's child.

People have been seen feeding cookies, mints, gummi bears, Tums, biscuits, cough drops, bread, and all sorts of vegetables to our animals. Some will

feed leaves and greenery not realizing the animals may eat it happily even though it is poisonous and could kill them. Many ornamental trees and shrubs are toxic to animals. Carrots and apples CAN be good for horses, but ONLY in small amounts and not fed constantly from the human hand. Uncontrolled amounts of any of these "goodies" can cause illness or even death to a horse. And human hands are fragile.

A horse has only one small stomach. He is physically suited to eating food such as grass or hay for many hours throughout the day. His top lip is very deft at picking out the best bits of food. This is important because once a horse swallows, whatever he has swallowed is with him for better or worse. A horse cannot regurgitate. A cow's lips aren't so flexible because a cow has a four-part stomach and regurgitates, and ruminates, and chews its cud and so on.

Those dexterous equine top lips are one of the world's main systems of communication—the horse's mouth. Horses communicate a wide range of equine emotions with their lips and teeth. They use that top lip to investigate new objects by touch. A horse will take hold of another horse's skin in his teeth and pull to express friendship or love. Biting is part of the mating ritual. Horses groom each other with their teeth, raking and scratching each other's necks, backs, and rumps. A horse will open his mouth and show his teeth to threaten. He will punch with his teeth to say buzz off. He nips to show displeasure or impatience and he bites when angry. Horses will communicate in this fashion with humans, especially if encouraged by feeding out of the hand.

An outstretched hand will be nipped by a horse who finds it empty and has been taught by people it should contain food. Even a very gentle animal will do this. A horse can get angry and savagely bite to insist on food. Horses are greedy and emotional animals.

For their health and yours, please do not pet or feed the horses or other animals. Treats are to be given only under the direct supervision of current members of the coach and livestock staff. These instructions are truly for the safety and well-being of the animals and the protection of visitors. They should be followed by all.

## A PET OWNER'S HARDEST DECISION

By Karen V. Smith

On Saturday, November 12, 1988 my mother noticed our family cat—a calico named Little Kitty—was acting a little strange. She had stayed curled up in a cedar chest and appeared not to have eaten except for a small can of cat food all day. I joked with my mom saying that maybe two cans a day for all these years may have finally caught up with her.

On Sunday there was no change; she was still in the cedar chest. We decided that she would go to the veterinary hospital first thing Monday morning. Upon arrival Dr. Sprinkel examined Little Kitty. He agreed she was ill. They kept her at the hospital for tests and for observation.

They ran a routine blood count and Leukemia test

and both were negative. A serum chemistries test revealed kidney and liver failure. There was increased calcium and phosphorous which wasn't concentrating in the urine. This led Dr. Sprinkel to believe a toxic substance was in her system which she had eaten or drank.

Dr. Sprinkel called us to see if we had any antifreeze around that she could have gotten into. Apparently animals will drink antifreeze over water, if given the choice, because it is very sweet. But the answer was no. He asked if we let her outside where she could have gotten in one of the neighbors yards. The answer, yes. Dr. Sprinkel could not be sure it was antifreeze, but he did know it was some kind of toxin.

They started Little Kitty on I.V. fluids with supportive therapy—B vitamin injections to help her liver and kidneys function better.

Tuesday Kitty was worse. Her serum chemistry values had increased. This meant her kidney and liver were not responding to the treatment. Everything was being done that could be done. All we could do was wait.

Wednesday, still no change. They continued therapy, stopped I.V. fluids.

On Thursday Little Kitty had become semi-comatose and had labored breathing. During her stay at the hospital she had eaten very little and was lethargic.

Now came time for our family to make a hard decision, and one that most pet owners will have to face. No one can tell another person what to do at a time like this. There are no guidelines to follow. I have worked with animals all my life, be it my own or someone else's. These are things I take into consideration:

1. That ample time and treatment has been given.
2. Medical opinion feels there is less than a 50/50 chance of recovery.
3. Animal no longer is enjoying life.
4. Animal is in chronic pain.

The decision was made if Little Kitty did not show any improvement by morning we would have her put to sleep. Friday morning Little Kitty was put to sleep to end her suffering.

The histopathology report from the state lab revealed a choleciferol agent in her system. It was evident that she had eaten this substance. It appears in mouse poison; two common names are Rampage and Ortho Rat-B-Gone. Both products can be poisonous and toxic when ingested in certain amounts. Any amount could be a life threatening concern.

There was not any mouse poison around our house. We can only assume an unsuspecting neighbor left some out where she could get in it. Please be careful to place poisons where children and pets can't get access to it.

I would like to thank Dr. Sprinkel, his associate Dr. Mark Mangelsdorf and the Noah's Ark Veterinary Hospital staff for their help with Little Kitty and supplying information for this story.

**QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? Please write to:**  
Animal Editor, MHW. Colonial Williamsburg  
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Kay Williams, *Editor*; Richard Nicoll, *Manager*.