

# Animal News



## ODE TO A (FINALLY) PREGNANT COW

Joy and rapture has come over our staff  
For Alice, the Red Devon heifer's in calf!  
This coming winter she'll surely produce  
A bouncing Red Devon bovinian papoose.  
We're jumping with gladness, we're bursting  
with pride,  
For Alice the Red Devon's "bunny has died!"

## NEW SHEEP UPDATE

Further information on when and how our new English Leicester sheep from New Zealand will arrive has been delayed due to an animal traffic tie up at the Canadian Quarantine Station. They are booked solid for quite some time and we are on the waiting list. We seem to be experiencing some of the same problems our visitors do when seeking Historic Area accommodations at Grand Illumination time.

## HORSES COMING AND GOING

A grey 8-year-old Percheron cross gelding named Rod has joined the CWF Stable. Rod was purchased earlier this spring and has spent the last 2-1/2 months in training at Fredericksburg with Robert Curtis. Jim, a black 5-year-old Percheron cross who was partners with Romeo last year, accompanied Rod and they were worked as a pair. Watch for Rod and Jim on the Street.

Mel, one of the horses who arrived early this spring, has failed to meet the requirements to be a Colonial Williamsburg carriage horse. He is not suited for working on pavement. An appropriate new home for him has been found. This had nothing to do with his antics reported on the back page of this issue. It is O.K. for a C.W. horse to have a sense of humor.

## SAD NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

Linsey, one of our new lambs, died, likely from a disease called coxidia. She was treated by Dr. Steve Chapman, the vet who saved Beltane and Quentin, but without success. Tell the kids in your life that the little angels needed a lamb to play with. Have fun Linsey.

## BARN CATS ON MOUSE PATROL

by Karen V. Smith

When entering the barn you may feel something brush up against your leg or hear a piercing meow. You have just been caught by the mouse patrol. Ethel and Lucy are on duty 24 hours a day.

We keep our new mouse patrol kittens in tip top shape with the help of Dr. Meryl Lessinger, D.V.M., of Animal Clinic of Williamsburg. Dr. Lessinger has vaccinated our patrollers for feline distemper which is an air-borne virus and highly contagious among cats. This virus affects the upper respiratory tract.

Ethel and Lucy have been vaccinated for feline leukemia (F.E.I.V.) which is another air-borne virus. F.E.I.V. can cause leukemia (a blood cell cancer) or lymphosarcoma (a tumor that can occur in almost any tissue or organ). Both F.E.I.V. and feline distemper are just transmitted in cats only.

But our mouse patrol is also vaccinated for RABIES. Cats that are rabid are far more dangerous than dogs because they are so agile and elusive. Rabies can be transmitted animal to animal as well as animal to HUMAN. Rabid raccoons have been found as close as New Kent County. There is a new state law in effect as of July 1, 1988, which states that all domestic cats must be vaccinated for rabies.

The last and final requirement for the mouse patrol was family planning. Since the job requires speed and agility, it would be hard to perform with little ones following you; and besides that, there are too many unwanted cats and kittens in the world. So Dr. Lessinger spayed our young cats.

We are happy to report that since Lucy and Ethel took office, not a single mouse has been seen alive.

Here's a schedule of vaccinations you should follow for your cat:

**FELINE DISTEMPER:** first vaccination at 7 to 8 weeks of age; repeat every 3 to 4 weeks until 14 weeks old; annual booster.

**FELINE LEUKEMIA:** first vaccination at 9 weeks; second 3 weeks later; third 3 months later; annual booster.

**RABIES:** first vaccination at 4 months of age, good for one year; next vaccination in a year will be good for 3 years.

## HORSE CATCHER IN THE WRY

Mel, one of the new horses, showed off one of his talents to us the other day. He Houdinied himself out of his halter and went running up the hill, flagging his tail. When we tie our horses we always try to use halters and ropes that are not easily broken. But, Mel's halter did not break. He somehow wiggled out of a halter he had been securely tied with before. He Houdinied himself to freedom.

As Mel went for a merry canter through the parking lot and on to Nicholson Street, Mr. Nicoll took Molly, Mel's team mate, and followed. Others at the stable grabbed buckets of grain, jumped in their trucks, and headed for the York Street pasture.

Mr. Nicoll took Molly with him because, although Mel gladly left, it wouldn't be long before he would all of a sudden discover he was quite alone and would surely die without her. In other words, Molly was as good a bait to catch him with as a bucket of grain.

The rest of the gang headed for the York Street pasture because that is where Mel and Molly were last turned out. Horses often return to familiar places where they feel safe. (Which is why there's a truism about horses refusing to leave their stalls when the barn is burning down.)

Mel loped up Nicholson Street and into the fenced stable yard at the Powell House, where a kind and clever fellow employee, closed the gate behind him. The stable gang spotted him on the way to York Street and he was duly fussed at and over.

Now Mel was lucky. A horse on the loose is in great danger, especially from motor vehicles. Anyone driving who spots a loose horse should stop, or at the very least proceed extremely slowly and with great caution. The horse may seem calm, but anything can startle him and cause him to leap foolishly into the path of a vehicle. Like Mel, any loose horse will soon discover the price of freedom is separation from his buddies.

A horse is a herd animal. Separation from his own kind can cause great anxiety and fear. If you see a loose animal, stop all traffic. We don't worry about our bus drivers. Their skill is known. Other drivers may not know what to do. Stop them if a loose animal is nearby.

While the horse may be anxious because he's found himself alone, he will take note of the luscious grass and other munchies so carefully maintained by Landscape. He will start to eat if allowed to settle down for a moment. So there's really no point in trying to chase a horse on foot. Not only can the horse run faster, but if he thinks he's being chased, he may panic. But try to see where he's going. Use the phone. Call Security and let them know. Call the building he seems to be heading towards.

If a loose horse stops near you, don't immediately walk towards him. Let him graze a little while. Let him get his mind on good grass. Give him a chance to relax. Since his buddies are not around he may even come to you. Don't stare at him and don't make eye contact. That's a sign of hostility. Try to get a

little closer but don't walk straight to him. If the horse really seems antsy, sit down. Horses are curious. He'll likely come to you and give you a sniff. And, if it's during normal working hours you can probably be of biggest help by just letting the horse graze and keeping visitors away and quiet. Someone from the stable or Security will show up shortly with bucket of grain, lead shank, and halter.

If the horse, like Mel, runs to an enclosure, just shut the gate, or block the entrance. Don't be afraid to stand your ground if you are acting as a human gate. If you stand your ground and stare at the horse, he will turn away from you. But that doesn't mean you can corner him. If you try to tightly corner an anxious horse he may become fearful. Then he would run over you.

A loose horse running free can be a pretty sight, but he can be a danger to himself and others. If you see one, make the right phone calls, stop traffic, and don't excite the animal.

Meanwhile, back at the main stable — we, being suddenly made aware of the Amazing Mel and his Houdini act, and its lack of entertainment value, will be sure he gets tied with very close fitting headgear from now on.



The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser  
Richmond, July 26, 1799

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## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Please write to: Animal Editor, MHW.  
Colonial Williamsburg Animal News is published by Coach and Livestock Operations, Historic Trades Department. Kay Williams, Editor; Richard Nicoll, Manager.