

**USERL Richmond Area  
Meeting Notes  
February 18, 2010**

Meeting called to order by Susan White, Regional Director, at 7pm. Vicki Pinner read the minutes from the previous meeting held on December 10, 2009. Our January meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions.

**Oral Reports from Coordinators:**

**Court Cases/Investigations** – Susan gave an update on pending/completed court cases.

- 1) Wilkerson Case – Convicted on December 7<sup>th</sup> on 7 counts of animal abuse.
- 2) Prince Edward County Case – defendant changed lawyers which has caused a delay; mostly will be tried in April.
- 3) Hanover County Case – scheduled for March 4<sup>th</sup> – request for members to attend
- 4) Powhatan County Case – Defendant took a plea deal; 2 years probation and needs to pay a total of \$26,500 in fines and if unable to pay fines within a year will be required to serve jail term.

**Adoption & Fosters** – Kim Chewning-McCarthy gave an update with no new adoptions occurring since our last meeting. Two people are interested in pursuing adopting; one is interested in Linus and the other is interested in Angelina. Kim asked for pocket change for the Rainbow Bridge Fund; amount donated at the last meeting was \$73.00. We lost 3 horses since the last meeting – Dixie, Sweetheart and Henry.

Susan requested those who are interested in learning and completing fostering/adoption site visits to let her and Kim know. These visits not only included people interested in adopting one of our horses, but those already adopted out. The first year visits occur every six months then every year thereafter. The adopted horses are always owned by USERL so if for what ever reason the individual can no longer care for the horse (s), they need to contact us and we will take the horse (s) back.

Kim also updated us on the fundraising for Tee's medication; enough money was raised to purchase the needed supply. Thanks to all who contributed.

**Volunteers** – Vicki Pinner shared more volunteer applications are coming in. The barn managers reported new people interested in helping at the rehab barns. Bryan Duchesne, our web master, will post updated pdf documents – Volunteer Application, Release Form and Volunteer Packets on the website for easy access to those interested in volunteering.

**Fundraising Event for Tee** – Virginia discussed Tee's illness EPM; it is a disease caused by a protozoa parasite which spread by possum feces. Horses contract the parasite by ingesting contaminated feed, hay or water. The parasite is drawn to the horse's spine and will travel up and down causing inflammation and damage. No cure although medicines are available to help. The one purchased for Tee through the donations of members is the best out there. Eventually the parasite will die, but it can

take a long time. The horse can have relapses brought on by stress, but can be managed with medications. Virginia discussed the fundraiser planned on Saturday, February 28 from 9am – 3pm at the Centreville Fire Station. \$20, lectures at 9am, 11am, 1pm and demos/hands on training at 10am, Noon and 2pm. Virginia will lecture on the basics – vital signs, what to do in an emergency and building a first aid kit. Lunch will be served. Members requested Virginia discussed a topic of horse care at each of our meetings and requested more seminars.

Susan mentioned a number of Southern States/Tractor Supply gift cards were received from the Angel Trees and barn managers need to request the cards to use to pay for feed.

Yard/Fire Sale has a tentative date of March 20<sup>th</sup> with 19<sup>th</sup> for set-up - volunteers are need for both days (Susan passed out a sign up sheet); previous items left over from the Tack Sale in December will be for sale as well as a request for members to donate clothing, jewelry, etc for the sale. Tables will also be for sale at \$20 for those in the community wanting to sell their items. Event will take place at Mechanicsville Fire Station.

Susan passed around a sign-up sheet for helping with picking up and unloading hay for the rehab barns, Fundraising Committee and for a Refreshment Committee. The Fundraising Committee will work with Suzanne Deer on attending events – booth set-ups and manning to help educate the community on proper care of horses as well as for fundraising activities. Educating the community on horse care is very important role for the organization. The Refreshment Committee will work together to coordinate beverages and snacks for the meetings.

A plea for hay and any one able to donate money for hay was made by Susan. We have 25 horses in rehab and 60 in foster care. We will need to take 7 back from foster care, because the horses' health is deteriorating due to age/illness. Kim shared the story of Orion who was adopted then his owners gave him away. When Kim returned for a follow-up visit Orion was gone. When found, he was not in good condition – very thin and ridden hard. Susan reiterated how important it is for those who adopt USERL horses that the horses always belong/owned by the organization. Horses are not to be given away or sold.

Susan reminded members it is critical not to release the location of the rehab barns. The horse community is a small one and people do talk. By keeping the whereabouts of the barn confidential, we secure the safety of the rehab barn property owners, volunteers and the horses.

If anyone knows of some one with an empty barn and property who may be interested in donating their space to let Susan know. People may ask if it is tax deductible. Susan reminded us we need to tell them to contact their accountant. We are not tax experts nor do we want to put the organization at risk by misadvising someone.

Scott Pauley will be the liaison between the vets and problems as well as setting up a relationship with Ashland Feed to get feed in bulk. Barn Managers are to contact Scott to discuss the needs at their barn.

Bryan suggested adding “pieces of advice” articles for the internet site. Discussion of types of articles such as the volunteers' experiences, links to great horse sites for members/community to link to such as horse.com. Need to be careful to protect the privacy of the barns, horses and volunteers. Susan suggested the group think more on this and decide at the next meeting of how the group wants to handle.

Susan highlighted upcoming events:

- 1) Pet Expo – Suzanne Deer may still need volunteers for Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>.  
The event \$10 adults.
- 2) Benefit for Tee – Fliers on the website
- 3) Yard/Fire Sale
- 4) Carytown (Moshi Moshi) – Benefit, silent auction

Anne mentioned a Disaster Animal Recovery Training on March 5 – 7 Lavanna County with lectures and demos. For more information, please visit the [humanesociety.u.org](http://humanesociety.u.org) site. As of our meeting, they did not have enough people to run the class.

Virginia, Rockville Rehab Barn Manager, recommended taking free on-line classes though FEMA.org. She has taken the classes and found the information invaluable to animal safety in an emergency/disaster situation.

The group discussed the challenges at the rehab barns due to the weather – mud and ice. Susan mentioned using old carpet in mud spots/places to assist with the horses and volunteers footing. The King William barn requested carpet needed and Susan advised she has some old carpet available. Ask neighbors and family for old carpet, because carpet companies will not give left over carpet pieces to organizations.

Virginia mentioned being able to get 15 pallets of pellet bedding (need to mist) for free from Guardian. She is working with Carl to see if we can receive more bedding they have not been able to sell.

Susan set the Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting for Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup> 7pm at St. Martins Episcopal Church, 9000 St. Martin's Lane, Richmond, VA 23294. Minutes from this meeting will be posted on the web as well as Yahoo Message Board.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Minutes submitted by Colleen Estep