



PEGASUS

HoofPrint

Riding for the Disabled of ACT(Inc.)

Term 1 March 2006

Well here we are at the beginning of another new year at Pegasus. It's quite an exciting year, as we will have some new schools participating in our programs. We would like to extend a very warm welcome to these new schools, their teachers, riders and their parents. Pegasus always has an 'open doors' policy with parents and friends always welcome to come and watch classes. We also have special Family Days planned for the last weeks of Term 2 and Term 4. Parents will receive an invitation to these Family Days where you will have the opportunity to meet your child's coach and receive some feedback from them on the rider's progress.

This edition of HoofPrint is jam packed. Our coaches have been very busy over the break trialling and training some new horses, so we are delighted to introduce them to you. Unfortunately we also have some sad farewells with both Kiltie and Mister leaving our programs. This edition also highlights our new web page which will be a great source of information for you.

We continue to include information about our volunteers, this time with an interview with Sheila King, a regular volunteer who is now commencing her training to become a qualified coach.

Also in this edition we have included the key dates for 2006 (see dates for your diary below), an overview of recent volunteer training, some important information on policy development and some fantastic news about a grant from the Department of Education.

I hope our continuing and our new riders, friends and supporters enjoy this edition of HoofPrint, and the coming year at Pegasus.

Becky Layton, Executive Officer

New Pegasus Website Goes Live

Anyone who has done a Google search for Pegasus in the last few years will realise how dreadfully out of date our website has become. Thanks to the help of Naomi Thompson and her team at Mission Australia we are delighted to announce that we now have a new look website and a new web address. Just go to www.pegasusact.com.au to check it out! There are heaps of interesting facts about Pegasus, a gallery of our wonderful ponies, some interesting stories and some great interactive games for riders to play in the Horseplay area (with much thanks to the Horsewyse magazine). Anyone interested in making donations, enquiring about volunteering or learning about our programs can now do it all at the click of a mouse. Mission Australia provided all of their services free of charge and have done a fantastic job in re-vamping the site. Thanks Naomi and team!

Dates for your diary

- **Term 1:** Sat 25 Feb- Thurs 13 April.
- **Term 2:** Mon 1 May - Sat 8 July
- **Pegasus Obstacle-a-thon (fundraiser):** during normal class times in 22 - 27 May.
- **Term 3:** Mon 7 Aug - Sat 30 Sept
- **Term 4:** Mon 16 Oct - Sat 9 Dec
- **Family Days:** during normal class times in the weeks of 3 - 8 July and 4 - 9 Dec.

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Pegasus Events

Working bee sees Pegasus safe for summer

Late last year we put the call out for volunteers to assist us to get Pegasus bush fire ready. We were delighted when many of our regular volunteers and parents put up their hand to help and arrived with lawnmowers, rakes, gloves and trailers in tow.

Jo Skimin and Debbie Butt (and family) gave up yet another Sunday to co-ordinate the working bee, but the end result was well worth it with dead timber cleared, mowing around the buildings and paddocks slashed to reduce the fire hazard.

A big thankyou goes out to Jo and all the volunteers who helped.

School Holiday Gymkhana a great success

Our January school holiday program ended with a bang this year with a mini gymkhana for participants. There were games on the horses and unmounted activities such as the gum boot throwing and bridle building competitions.

The blue team and the red team fiercely competed all the events, but the horses and volunteers were definitely the winners with apple eating and freddo frog eating competitions respectively.

In the spirit of true participation all riders went home with a ribbon and a small prize generously donated by the Kippax newsagent.

Well done to all the riders and ponies and a big thanks to coaches Debbie and Kris and volunteer, Kim, who all co-ordinated the events.



Fenella and Hayley during the carrot eating race.



Volunteer, Anita, helping Olivia to build a bridle.



Playing the Monte Carlo game.



Preparing for the Gum Boot Toss

Smiley makes his debut!

Anyone who made it along to the Pegasus Christmas party and Volunteer Awards in late December would have met our special guest. No, it wasn't Santa making an early appearance, but Smiley our new mascot.

In addition to his Christmas appearance, Smiley also recently joined us on an outing to the Multi-Cultural Festival where Pegasus had a stall to promote our programs, recruit volunteers and promote disability awareness through hands on activities that simulate disability. Several Pegasus volunteers helped out on the day, answering enquiries and holding Smiley's hoof as he greeted some young fans.

If you'd like to see Smiley in action, make sure you get along to the Charny Carnival on Saturday 25 March where he will be entered in the mascot race and will hopefully bring home the prize money!!! By the way, if you know of anyone who can run pretty fast while wearing a horse head, please make sure you see Becky at the Pegasus office!

We are also looking out for any volunteers who could give up an hour or two to help out at our stall at the Carnival.



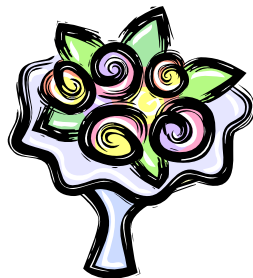
Coaches Corner

Get Well Soon Dylis and Rob!

Many of our riders and volunteers will know of Dylis Mc Connell Hunt, one of the hard working volunteer coaches at Pegasus. Unfortunately Dylis recently had to undergo some surgery that has put her out of action for a while. She will not be returning to her coaching duties this term, but we hope that we will see her back on deck at Pegasus very soon.

Rob Oakley, regular volunteer and national squad rider has also been in the wars lately.

We hope you both get well **very** soon.



Programs re-arranged to make way for new school involvement

Late last year the staff at Pegasus spent some time looking at our schedule of classes and trying to find a way for us to offer places to the 90 or so riders on our waiting list. We also wanted to review the school groups that attend Pegasus to ensure that we were being fair, equitable and transparent in our service delivery.

As part of this review process we invited all schools to provide us with feedback on their involvement in the program and to offer any suggestions as to how we can fairly stretch our limited services to the many people who would like to access them. We received some very well thought out responses and we thank the schools for the time and effort that they put in to provide us with the feedback.

Based on this information, we have slightly re-structured this year's program to allow riders from two new schools access. We'd like to welcome all the new riders and families from Black Mountain School and Macquarie Primary School to Pegasus.

The Pegasus Management Committee also recently established a sub-committee to develop a set of guidelines for access to our programs. Once developed, these guidelines should provide staff, teachers and parents with clear criteria on who is eligible to access our services. If you would like to have input into the development of these guidelines, please contact the Pegasus office on 6254 9190.

On line donation facility is a hit!

In our last newsletter we highlighted our new online donation facility available through ourcommunity.com. We have been delighted with the response, with several donors choosing to donate online through the Christmas period. Donations go towards the feed and upkeep of the ponies and help us find new equine friends for our riders. To make your tax deductible donation, just go to <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/pegasusrda> to make your secure online donation.



Volunteer Update

Farewell Clara

Pegasus has been very lucky to have a number of volunteers placed with us by AFS. In 2005 we enjoyed the company of Valerie and Eva from Switzerland and Austria and last year we played host to Clara, also from Austria.

Clara volunteered with us 5 days a week and became a valuable member of our team. Unfortunately her time at Pegasus finished in January and she is now safely home with her family in Vienna. In fact we recently received an email from her whilst she was on a two week skiing holiday. She was in -5degrees, while we were in 35!

Welcome to all our new and returning volunteers

January and February have been an incredibly busy time for our Volunteer Manager – Kris Ingram. Whilst you were all sitting at home wondering when Pegasus was going to start again, Kris was frantically contacting last year's volunteers to confirm that they would be returning, talking to our coaches to see what volunteers they would need for their classes and desperately seeking new volunteers to fill all the gaps. No easy feat that's for sure!

As well as all that, Kris has been working with our coaches to conduct orientation sessions for new volunteers and practical training for ongoing volunteers.

This year we also introduced a training register for each volunteer to ensure that they are provided with all the training that they require to do their job safely and effectively. If you somehow missed out on the training sessions, please make sure you let Kris know so that she can arrange for one of our coaches to work with you during one of your normal visits to Pegasus.

Fabulous Facts....

Pegasus Patron, Michael Milton, is about to compete in his fifth and final winter Paralympics. Michael competed in his first Paralympics in 1988 at age 14. At his second games in 1992, he was the first Australian athlete to win a winter gold medal and is now the most successful winter athlete with a total of 10 Paralympic medals including 6 gold.

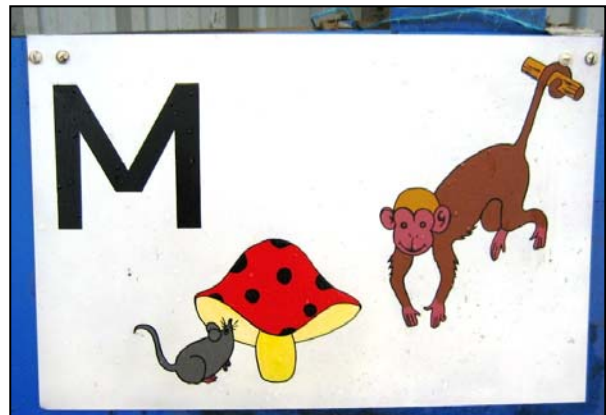
You can catch Michael in action on ABC TV at 6pm each evening on their highlights package or watch live online at www.paralympicsport.tv.

GOOD LUCK MICHAEL!

New look signs brighten up arena

Anyone who visits Pegasus will have noticed that our arena markers have been looking a bit worse for wear. These markers are traditionally used in dressage tests to indicate points in the area where competitors must perform a particular movement (eg halt at C, or trot a 20 metre circle at A). At Pegasus, the arena markers are primarily used to guide traffic flow ("Scott, please turn right at the letter M") or as part of a game ("Ashlyn, can you think of a part of a horse that starts with...B?").

One of our volunteers, Helen Southwell, recently began the process of repainting all of the signs. With only about 4 or 5 in place at the moment it has been amazing to see just how many riders have noticed our beautiful new letters scattered around the arena. Thanks Helen – they look fantastic.



M is for...

Introducing Sheila- our new trainee coach

Some of you may already know Sheila King, one of our regular Wednesday volunteers. Sheila recently decided to make the leap from leader/side-walker to coach, by signing up to undertake her coach training. We are delighted with Sheila's decision and our coaches are looking forward to working with her as she progresses through her training. Sheila answered the following questions for HoofPrint so you can get to know her better.

How long have you been a volunteer at Pegasus?
5 years

How often do you volunteer?

I'm in every Wednesday, all day, and sometimes on Saturday mornings or other days if Pegasus is short of volunteers. During my coach training I will also be working with Kris all day Monday. I have done both leading and side walking in classes and often get asked to put on a morning tea or help out with the "Smiley Tent" at promotional events.

Why do you volunteer? What do you get out of it?
Other than family I have two loves in my life. They are children and horses. I cannot think of a better way of satisfying those loves. The children at Pegasus enrich my life, especially when you see even the slightest improvement in their quality of life.

Why did you decide to undertake your coach training?

Education is very important when dealing with the complex disabilities that arise at Pegasus. It is easy to do more harm than good without the specialist knowledge that is needed. I felt honoured to be asked and I am very grateful to be considered worthy of the training.



Volunteer, Kim, working with a Pegasus rider and trainee coach Sheila. Mandy is being led by another volunteer, Elizabeth.

Fundraising Update

Big bash planned for Horses' Birthday

The newly formed Fundraising Sub – Committee met recently to begin planning a fundraising strategy for 2006. This year, the committee has decided to focus its efforts on one big event, rather than spreading itself too thin on a range of smaller activities. While we will still run the odd raffle or good value fundraising drive (eg the highly successful wine drive from Term 3 last year), most of our effort will be going into a big event linked to the Horses' Birthday on 1 August. Early plans are to hold an event at the Canberra Racecourse, so keep your diaries clear around this time. We will keep you posted as our plans develop.

Anyone who is interested in helping the committee to plan and run this event or can suggest some good contacts or donors, please contact Becky in the Pegasus office.

Department of Education and Lord Mayor's Trust continue their support

The ACT Department of Education recently notified us that our application for funding in 2006 has been successful. Last year the Department provided funding for us to offer 15 new places for riders on our waiting list, to contract a physio to work with riders and to purchase new toys and games for use in classes. While this is only annual funding we were very hopeful that we would be successful again this year and could continue the new places and services.

The recent announcement means that the additional places are secure for another year and we are currently negotiating a further contract with Therapy ACT so we can continue to enjoy the expertise of Marianne Davidson, one of their physiotherapists.

We are obviously delighted with this fantastic news (you should have seen Becky's victory dance when she opened the letter!) and of course extend an enormous thank you to the Department.

We also received good news recently with a further, sizable donation from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund (Eldon and Anne Foote Trust). The Foote Trust has provided significant donations to Pegasus over the past few years and we are pleased that they have decided to continue their support again this year.

Herd Happenings

Vale Mr. Elegant (Mister)

Over the Holidays we said farewell to one of our wonderful horses, Mister, at the ripe old age of 30. He had been at Pegasus on loan since 1987, and was eventually gifted to Pegasus by Alison and Barbara Donald. Alison had lessons with Bid Williams at Pegasus, and her mum Barbara, was a volunteer coach at Pegasus for many years. Alison had shown Mister very successfully for a number of years and this training made Mister a very valuable asset to the Pegasus herd. Mister taught many riders of all standards over the years. He was a very good lunge horse, could canter on the lead if necessary, and also worked as a hippotherapy horse. With Pegasus riders he competed in many gymkhanas, one day events, and dressage competitions over the years. He was always very reliable to take to competitions. In 1994 we took him and two RDA riders to Sydney for the National RDA Dressage Championships where he did us proud.

I'm sure those of you who knew Mister will agree with me when I say he had a strong personality. He had been the boss of the Pegasus geldings for as long as I can remember, managing to hold this position of authority through strength of personality rather than having to bully the other horses around. He could keep the others in line with just a "look"! He occasionally kept his riders and helpers in line with this look too!

Mister was a chronic "windsucker" and would latch onto any available edge he could find (many a bar of soap has been rubbed onto his stable door to try and stop him!). You would expect a horse with this habit to be poor in condition, but not Mister. Even in more recent years when he had completely worn his front teeth down to the gums he managed to stay in very good condition (often a little too good!).

Mister was an example of how much an educated horse of the right temperament can give to our riders. He knew what he was doing and was happy to oblige when his riders learnt to ask him correctly, and he was utterly patient and reliable while they were learning. A horse like this is possibly one that you only come across once in a life time. The number of riders that Mister introduced to the skills riding is countless. We will miss him very much and will be forever grateful that we were lucky enough to have him work with us for so many years.



"Mister, thank you!"

And another sad farewell

We have also recently said goodbye to another long time Pegasus pony. Kiltie has been at Pegasus since January 1994 and has helped hundreds of children learn to ride. At the age of 27 she recently had a few of seizures, which means that although she is very fit and healthy, she can no longer be used in our riding program for fear that she may have a seizure while she is being ridden.

She is all set for a wonderful retirement though as her previous owners – the Moore family – have agreed to have her back so she can live out the rest of her life on their property. Enjoy your retirement Kiltie - you certainly deserve it.



Kiltie

Introducing some new horses

It's been a very busy few months at Pegasus with our coaches using the break from classes to undertake some much needed horse hunting. This is always a very frustrating experience for them, as finding the right horse for our programs is very challenging. For every ten horses they look at, we would be lucky if one ended up suitable for the work.

In our last newsletter we introduced you to Tuff, a horse in on trial who we were confident would pass the tests required to become a Pegasus horse. Unfortunately he did not pass the vet check and has now returned home to his owners.

Since then, we have accepted two new horses to Pegasus. Emma is a 16 hand high Irish Sport Horse mare who has been provided on a three year loan whilst her owner is posted overseas. Emma is a solid horse, who will be able to carry some of our heavier riders – something that we are currently lacking in the herd. She is still in training at this stage, but hopefully will move into classes very soon.

We are also very happy to announce that we have finally spent the money raised last year at the 666ABC Canberra trivia night to purchase Hahn, a 14 hand high chestnut part arab gelding. He is quite a handsome horse with a big white blaze down his face and four white sox. His coat has a reddish tinge, which is quite fortunate given that the winning team at the trivia night won the right to name the horse that we bought – they chose the name Radish. So, as well as getting used to his new environment, Hahn is also getting used to his new name!



Radish was purchased from funds raised by 666ABC Canberra.

We also have three new horses on trial. Mini Mouse is a very cute bay brumby mare who only measures 12 hands high. Whilst we were not initially confident that she would be suitable as she seemed a bit flighty when handled, she now seems to be settling in much better and our coaches will soon need to make a decision as to whether she will be staying.

San is a 15.1 hand high bay quarter horse who some of our longer term riders and volunteers may remember. San has lived at Pegasus before but was sold to one of our staff a few years ago as he did not seem to be reliable enough to make a good RDA horse. San used to be a bit anxious during classes and did not settle into the work as we would have liked. Since then, he has spent the last few years riding out, being trained and getting him used to a wider variety of situations. Lani has now offered him back on loan and if he passes his trial will be back amongst his old friends in our paddocks.

The final horse that we have in on trial is Oscar - a 6 year old chestnut thoroughbred, with a racing background. He has a lovely calm personality, so whilst we normally would not consider a racehorse suitable for our programs, he may indeed find a home with us once our coaches have assessed him and trained him for RDA work. Even so, it will be quite a while before Oscar joins our riding program.

Finally, some of you may remember Banjo, a grey arab gelding who was on loan to Pegasus a few years ago. His owners asked for him to be returned, so we sadly said goodbye. Luckily their circumstances have again changed and they have offered him back to us on an indefinite loan. We are very happy to have him back in the herd.

Committee Update

Important information about new emergency plan

At its recent meeting, the Pegasus Management Committee approved a new emergency plan for Pegasus. Staff have been working hard at revising this plan, making sure that it manages risks effectively, but is still highly practical and workable. One of the key aspects that all parents and riders should be aware of is that **on high fire risk days (ie total fire ban days) all riders must have their transport remain at Pegasus whilst they ride. This is to ensure that should a fire break out on the property we have the means to evacuate all riders and volunteers. All riders, volunteers and visitors must also sign in on total fire ban days so we can be sure everyone is evacuated if necessary.**

Copies of the complete plan are available from the Pegasus office and your comments would be appreciated.

The Management Committee also approved an OH&S policy for Pegasus late last year. OH&S and risk management is a joint responsibility of everyone at Pegasus. Riders, volunteers, parents and staff all have a responsibility to report any dangers or unsafe practices so that they can be appropriately addressed.

Once again if you would like to see a copy of the policy, please contact the Pegasus office.

Please leave your headphones at home!

As a part of our safety procedures, Pegasus has recently decided that staff and volunteers should not use of headphones for MP3 players, mobile phones etc whilst working around the horses. Safe practices require us to rely on all our senses to monitor the activities of the horses and make sure we are not at risk. Headphones limit our ability to hear the movements of the horses and therefore place volunteers and staff and greater risk of injury. Please leave your headphones at home, or better still save your use of them for when you are cleaning a saddle in the tack room!

Boots back in order thanks to Rivett PS

A big thankyou goes out to the staff and volunteers that work with our Rivett Primary School riders. Whilst waiting in the common room they took the time to tidy up and re-label all of our riding boots. This is one of the many little jobs that needed to be done, but of course our staff just never have the time to do it.



Thanks to all the helpers who took the initiative to get this job done!

Thanks to our Supporters

Thank you to the following supporters for their generosity over the last few months:

- Pryde's Horsefeeds
- Mark Patterson of Patterson's Rural Contracting
- Jack Laing of Bungendore Vet Surgery
- Ken, Rebecca and Mark at the Canberra Vet Hospital
- Harvey Excel
- Di Jenkins Equine Care
- Fleur le Mesurier
- Lions Club of Belconnen
- Disability ACT
- The ACT and Commonwealth Departments of Education
- Department of Housing and Community Services
- Healthpact
- ACT Sport and Rec
- Manteena
- The volunteer Pegasus Management Committee
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund (Eldon and Anne Foote Trust)
- Harvey Norman Fishwyck store
- Norma Gregson
- Sir Richard Peek
- Saddle donor and Barbara's aunt.
- The many, many volunteers who help to keep Pegasus operating!

Our riders in action....

Take a look at these happy riders and volunteers with the Tuesday morning Rivett class!



Scott riding Sparkles with volunteer, Cathy.



Angus riding Max with volunteer, Lyn.

