



*Sparkles enjoying her massage!*

The holidays are over and term 3 is getting back into swing at Pegasus. The horses had a wonderful break with many enjoying free massages during their holidays as the 'guinea pigs' in an equine massage course that was held at Pegasus.

As well as this pampering, they also had their teeth checked and filed by one of our vets - Ian Neilson, of Ian Neilson and Associates Vet Centre. We thank Ian and the other fantastic veterinary support we receive from the teams at the Bungendore Vet Surgery and the Canberra Vet Hospital. All of the vets who care for our horses do a fantastic job at a very heavily discounted rate.

We also did a 'tune up' on our volunteers during the horses' holiday with Jo, Debbie, Kris and Pam all busy conducting training for our wonderful Pegasus volunteers. Topics ranged from our induction package, to emergency dismounts, to effective leading skills, to communicating with riders. We also had Marianne Davidson (Therapy ACT physiotherapist) speak to a group about ways to assist riders with physical disabilities. In total about 40 volunteers participated in some training during the break and we hope that they all found it useful.

This edition of HoofPrint includes an order form for this year's wine drive. This fundraiser was highly successful last year with a significant amount of money raised for Pegasus, but perhaps more importantly some very 'happy' customers!! We won over some sceptics with our wine selections and had quite a number of complimentary comments on the quality of the wines and the value for money. This year the wines will feature a commemorative label featuring the launch of the Pegasus Foundation (more info on the Foundation inside and at our website - [www.pegasusact.com.au](http://www.pegasusact.com.au) ).

We also feature a report on our successful Obstacle-a-thon, some benefits of our programs for our Cranleigh riders, an overview of the strategic planning process we are currently undertaking, a report on Rob Oakley's competition results from his trip to England, and some useful tips for volunteers ..... yet another action packed edition of HoofPrint!!!

*Becky Layton, Executive Officer*

## Dates for your diary

- **Term 3:** Mon 7 Aug - Sat 30 Sept
- **Term 4:** Mon 16 Oct - Sat 9 Dec
- **Wine Drive Orders Due:** Fri 8 Sept
- **Pegasus Games Day:** Sat 17 Sept

## Inside this issue

Editorial	1
Pegasus Events	2
Coaches Corner	4
Fundraising Update	4
Herd Happenings	5
Volunteer Update	5
Committee News	6
Rider's Rave	7
Thanks to our Supporters	8



## Pegasus Events

### Obstacle-a-thon a huge success

Thank you to all the riders who participated in our fundraising Obstacle-a-thon that was held in week four, last term. The event was a huge success, raising lots of money for Pegasus and even more smiles on the children's faces.

Our coaches worked hard to design and set up twenty two obstacles around the indoor arena and surrounding paddock. The kids loved them all, but throwing snowballs at Frosty the snowman, feeding Leo the lion and going fishing, were definitely the favourites!

As usual the Pegasus horses took it all in their stride with barely a sideways glance at the weird and wonderful obstacles.



*Alysha taking aim at Frosty in the Pegasus Obstacle-a-thon.*

### Fabulous fact....

The Obstacle-a-thon raised a grand total of \$3,758! Thank you to all the riders who assisted in seeking sponsors for the event.

Heather Cork (a Saturday rider) raised the most money - just over \$260 - and was presented with an glass serving plate that had been engraved with an image of a pony, which was generously donated by Pegasus volunteer Sheila King.

### Pegasus spreads its wings with Foundation launch

Pegasus is set to spread its wings and launch into the future with the establishment of the new Pegasus Foundation.

Foundation Patrons, Ray Silburn and Niki van Buuren, are excited to be involved.

"The Foundation has been established to provide a secure financial future for this important local community organisation", Silburn explained.

"Pegasus is a riding school with a difference. The majority of riders have a disability, but this doesn't stop them from enjoying the pleasures of riding and caring for their pony at Pegasus. The freedom, independence and confidence that the riding lessons provide, often outweigh the physical benefits of the activity" says Niki van Buuren.

"Since the 2003 bushfires, when I was badly burnt trying to rescue my own horses, I have climbed back into the saddle at Pegasus", van Buuren explains. "It was a huge step for me both physically and mentally, as I'm sure it is for most of the Pegasus riders. But it is immensely rewarding when you hop in that saddle and take up the reins - it gives you this enormous feeling of freedom and control, something I felt I had lost after my accident."

There is no doubt about the benefits that riders get from their time at Pegasus.

"Pegasus is the most amazing place", Silburn claims. "Each time I visit, I am continually astounded at the achievements of the riders and the support provided by the staff and volunteers. There are kids there that you never would believe could ride a horse, and yet there they are with big smiles on their faces, as they steer their ponies around obstacles in the arena or on a trail ride."

Silburn certainly knows about riding. His career as a leading Canberra jockey was cut short in 2005 when his horse came down during a race. Silburn suffered a broken neck and was told that he would never walk or hold his kids again.



*Foundation patrons Ray Silburn and Niki van Buuren at Pegasus with Spinner*

"There was no way I was going to give up", he claimed. "I spent 9 months in hospital in Sydney and only returned to Canberra in December last year. During that time I worked every moment of every day to try to regain some movement in my hands. Now I can hug my kids, use my mobile phone and get around just fine in my wheelchair."

Silburn was invited to visit Pegasus earlier this year. His passion for horses and children was embodied in what he saw that day.

"The kids I saw obviously loved the experience with their horse", he explained. "It brought back all of the struggles that I had been through since my accident, and made me realise just how much horses can influence people. At Pegasus they not only become the kid's friends, but also their vehicle for independence and self-esteem."

The Pegasus Foundation is a tax deductible trust fund that has been established to secure a long term future for the riding school. Dependent on government grants and donations to keep their service operating, Pegasus has realised the need to take control of its own future. The Foundation will be one of the keys.

More information on the Foundation can be found on the Pegasus website - [www.pegasusact.com.au](http://www.pegasusact.com.au).



*Niki van Buuren (riding Spinner) as Ray Silburn and the media look on at the Foundation's media launch*

### **Paralympic hopeful Rob Oakley returns from English Nationals**

Local para-equestrian, Rob Oakey has just returned from a successful trip to Gloucestershire, UK to compete in the Hartpury CDPI. Hartpury will also host the World Championships next year.

The trip was a part of the RDAA's Paralympic Preparation Program.

Rob competed on borrowed mount "Busela Lady." In the teams competition he performed well with the highest team score, helping Australia to fifth place out of 14 nations. Unfortunately, Lady injured herself in the stall prior to the individual

competition and while still able to compete, was well below her best. In the interests of the horse, Rob withdrew from the freestyle.

"It was disappointing" Rob explained, "but that is often the case when horses are involved. Just when you get it together, something out of your control happens and you're out of the competition. It's important to look forward to the next ride."

Rob has also qualified for the NSW Open Dressage finals at medium level and then he will be returning to Europe in mid September to compete at the Belgium CDPI. This is an important competition as it is a qualifying event for Beijing. He is also working on consolidating his performances at Prix St George. He's one of only 5 or 6 riders with a disability in the world to reach this level of competition.

Another opportunity to qualify for the Paralympics will be at next year's Australian RDA Championships, as the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) has announced this will also be a qualifying event for the Paralympics.

Rob is always interested in talking to anyone who might be able to assist him. If you have a horse of small tour quality or potential but don't have the time or funding to develop it, why not consider a partnership with this outstanding para-equestrian. High standard coaching and international competition can be achieved. Alternatively, you can make a tax deductible donation via his Paralympic Training Fund with the national RDA office. Please contact Gill Thompson - Rogers on (03) 9731 7388 or [national@rda.org.au](mailto:national@rda.org.au) for more information about this fund.



*Pegasus rider, Rob Oakley, with his borrowed horse, Busela Lady, and owner Rachel Spence at Hartpury in England.*

## Coaches Corner

### Uni student sings coaches' praises

*Pegasus often has work experience students undertake a placement at Pegasus. We recently had a Signadou education student do a week long placement with us. We thought we'd share some of his reflections about our teaching program with you.*

My name is Brett Seaman and I am currently undertaking a Bachelor of Education at the Australian Catholic University. Part of the course requirements in third year is to partake in a Community Engagement Program where students are to complete 40 hours of volunteer work in an educational setting other than a school.

I commenced my Community Engagement Program unsure of what Pegasus had to offer me. I have an interest in special needs and I was aware that Pegasus caters to these children, but otherwise I knew very little of Pegasus.

On the first day I quickly realised that I had chosen a very special place. Pegasus provided me with much more than I could ever have imagined. Pegasus offers both children with a disability and able bodied children riding lessons and they do it in an educational setting that is relaxed and secure. The coaches are encouraging, patient and approachable.

However, it was the educational aspect that I found most beneficial. All of the coaches at Pegasus were encouraging and always ensured that all lessons covered the three principles of pedagogy:

1. Intellectual quality - All teachings were aimed at the child's level of development.
2. Quality learning environment - Relaxed, confident and comfortable during the whole lesson.
3. Significance - All students have objectives or goals they are to achieve per term and ongoing goals for the year.

The coaches had also obviously spent a lot of time ensuring that all lessons started at the appropriate level of development and that the students were stretched to problem solve something that was not immediately available to them but could be reached when they extended themselves.

I started the program knowing that Pegasus was a riding school for people with a disability, but came away realising it provides so much more. Pegasus builds self esteem, confidence, patience, tolerance and acceptance. Pegasus provides their students with a safe, secure environment that instils the children with a desire to learn and better themselves.

## Fundraising Update

### Annual Wine Drive Set To Go

The 2006 Wine Drive order form is attached to this edition of HoofPrint. If you didn't receive a copy of the order form, please just call the Pegasus office and we will email, fax or snail mail you a copy.

The wines come to us via a supportive Melbourne wholesaler, but we get the wines at an excellent rate so are able to make a decent profit for Pegasus, while still giving you a very good deal. This year's wines will feature a label to commemorate the launch of the Pegasus Foundation.

Options for delivery include Australia Post direct to your door (for a \$9.95 delivery fee,) or you can collect your wines from Pegasus in late September (delivery fee is only \$3, which is waived if you buy a dozen or more bottles).

Enjoy your wines and make sure you hand the order form on to all your friends! Remember the more wine sold, the more money for Pegasus programs.

### A Fundraiser with a Difference!

We were delighted to receive some money from a local donor recently. He is onto a fundraiser - with a difference.

Local solicitor Ben Duncan and his mates don't mind a friendly game of poker. But to keep things legal, they decided that the winner of the regular poker evenings should donate their winnings to a local charity. Pegasus is delighted that Ben is such a good poker player, as we have had a pretty steady stream of donations from Ben of late! He even dropped by this week with the trophy that the winner also receives and proudly showed off the fact that Pegasus has now been immortalised with an engraving on "The Moose", alongside other lucky charities!

Just in case you were wondering, Ben leaves the donation in the name of "The Moose", so that he does not personally benefit from the tax deductibility available from Pegasus donations.

Thanks Ben (and "The Moose")!



Ben Duncan (holding the Moose trophy), Spinner and Ben's fellow charity poker player, Will Sharpe

## Entertainment books still available at Pegasus

Many Pegasus regulars have picked up a 2006 Entertainment Book, but just in case you thought you were too late - there are still plenty left. These books contain discount and 2 for 1 vouchers for hundreds of local cafes, restaurants, takeaways, entertainment venues and retail outlets. They also have discounts for interstate and overseas travel, accommodation and hire cars etc.

The books are available at Pegasus for \$50, with \$10 from every book coming directly back to Pegasus. The books are excellent value, as you are able to make back your \$50 purchase price even if you only use a few of the vouchers that are valid through to June 2007.

There is a sample book available for viewing in the Pegasus common room. Please see staff to purchase a book or obtain a copy to show to your friends. Remember - the more books we sell, the more funding for our programs!

## Herd Happenings

### Introducing Dallas, Rose and Li'l Em

We have purchased a new horse named "Dallas". He is a 15.3hh, 13year old, chestnut stock horse with a white blaze (yes he will be easily confused with Red Jack our other chestnut with a white blaze!). We bought him from a gentleman in Sydney where for the last few years he has mainly been show jumping. We are giving Dallas an easy introduction to Pegasus life (as we do all our new comers), with a work up by our equine massage therapist, Di Jenkins, to get any kinks out and then work by the staff coaches. We hope to have him working in a couple of classes by mid term. Dallas is a very quiet fellow who is a gentleman in the paddock with the other horses, but he does need some time to get to know and trust both us and his new environment.

Rose is a 9year old 15.3hh brown bay Percheron mare who has had a high level of dressage education. She is the same height as Dallas, but about three times his weight! Like many of us, she doesn't consider herself "fat", just well boned. I've never seen a horse eat a biscuit of hay as fast as she does. I don't think she chews, she just inhales it!!!! She is a very friendly horse, so if you see her around the yards, say "Hi" and give her a pat.



*Rose in the yards at Pegasus*

Li'l Em is a 20 year old chestnut pony mare who we have on loan. She is a very quiet and experienced kid's pony. We placed her straight into some classes at the end of last term, as we felt she had the experience to jump right in. Her name is actually Emma, but seeing as we already have another (big) Emma we had to differentiate between the two of them. Lil' Em is very bossy in the paddock with the other horses, so she does cause an uproar at feed times in her efforts to be the first to get the hay as we put it out. She's just not learnt yet that at Pegasus, there is always enough to go around!

### More new fences to keep our horses safe

In our last edition we told you about our beautiful new yards and automatic waterers which we were able to install through an ACT government grant.

We are now very happy to announce that with much thanks to a generous donation from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund (Eldon and Anne Foote Trust), we have been able to replace our front boundary fence which was in much need of repair. We had been greatly concerned about the state of this fence as it is our main boundary with the general public and serves as an important safety barrier for our horses. The fence was an original one, from when Pegasus first moved to the site about 30 years ago. The costs involved to replace the 1 km stretch of fencing had seemed unsurmountable for us.

Fortunately, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund provided Pegasus with another sizeable donation this year, which has allowed us to replace the fence. We are very grateful to the Fund for their ongoing support of Pegasus and assure them that their funding has been used to keep both the public and our horses safe in each other's company.

Our thanks also goes to Mark Patterson from Patterson's Rural Contracting for the great rates he gave us on the new fence.

## Volunteer Update

### Midyear training has been and gone

Many of our new and old volunteers would have made the trek out to Pegasus in the last week of the horses' holidays for our mid year volunteer training sessions. The coaches used these sessions to ensure that all volunteers have completed the required theory and practical induction training. Unfortunately a few people were unable to attend the sessions, but don't worry if you haven't - Kris will be running more sessions soon and will be in touch with you shortly about when you are available to come to one.



*Physio, Marianne Davidson (2nd from right), conducting volunteer training.*

Some classes with experienced volunteers undertook training on specific topics relevant to their riders. Jo ran a fantastic session on communicating with riders with intellectual disabilities and Marianne Davidson from Therapy ACT ran an equally worthwhile session on assisting riders with physical disabilities. We hope all our volunteers found the training worthwhile, but we are always interested in your feedback, so don't hesitate to let us know how we can improve.

### Kris's Weekly Volunteer Tips

How do you keep 100 volunteers trained and informed of changes each week? You use a weekly volunteer tip as a reminder of good practice!

Volunteers will hopefully have noticed Kris's weekly volunteer tips that have begun appearing near the Volunteer's Sign-in Book in the common room. Check out the latest useful tips:

- Remember not to lean on or rest your elbow on the horse you are leading (you wouldn't like it if they did it to you!!!)
- Always make sure that there is at least one horse's length between horses AT ALL TIMES. This includes when they are lined up side by side.
- Please make sure you turn your mobile phone off before you help in lessons.

## Emergency contact details

### Help us keep our records up to date

Pegasus maintains records on riders and volunteers for two main reasons. The first is so we can contact you if a lesson has to be cancelled (we all know how annoying it is to drive here only to realise your rider isn't coming!), but more importantly we also need emergency contact details in case of an accident. In contacting volunteers about our mid year training, we realised that many volunteers had not notified us of changes to their contact details. We are sure that many riders are probably in this situation too.

Please ensure that you notify us immediately if your contact details or the details of your emergency contact change. This is important not only for the smooth running of the organisation, BUT ALSO FOR YOUR SAFETY.

## Committee News

### Strategic Plan Review Underway

At a recent meeting, the Pegasus Management Committee recognised a need to review our current strategic plan. The current plan was written in 2004 and was intended to run through to 2009, however we have already achieved much of the plan and are starting to recognise new challenges for the future. The Committee therefore committed to a revision of the plan with assistance from an external consultant. Henny Oldenhove has been contracted to assist us with this review process. Henny has a wealth of experience with local, state and national sporting organisations, particularly in disability sport. Her most recent position was as the Executive Officer of the ACT Department of Sport and Recreation, where she became familiar with Pegasus and provided financial support for a number of our initiatives.

Henny will do a fantastic job in co-ordinating the review of the plan. She has already got the ball rolling with a session at Pegasus earlier this month to discuss the planning process we intend to take. She has also been meeting with staff, committee and other Pegasus stakeholders to identify the key issues and challenges that we are likely to face. The next step will be to hold a planning workshop to talk through these issues and develop our plans for the future. If you have an interest in participating in this process, please make sure you contact Becky so we can ensure your opinions are considered. We would also like to thank Disability ACT for providing some funding towards this significant planning process.

# Rider's Rave

## Understanding Autism

Autism was once thought to be incurable, but individuals with autism are now showing us that they can overcome, compensate for and otherwise manage many of its most challenging aspects.

Here are ten things every child with autism wishes you knew.

1. I am first and foremost a child.

I am not primarily 'autistic'. My autism is only one aspect of my total character. It does not define me as a person.

2. My sensory perceptions are disordered. The ordinary sights, sounds, smells and touches of everyday life can be downright painful to me. I may appear withdrawn or belligerent, but I am really just trying to defend myself. Here is why a 'simple' trip to the supermarket may be hell for me:

- My hearing may be hyper-acute. The loudspeaker booms, music whines from the sound system, babies wail. My brain can't filter all the input and I'm in overload.
- My sense of smell may be highly sensitive. The guy standing next to us hasn't showered today, the deli is handing out sausage samples, they're mopping up spilled bleach on aisle three....I'm dangerously nauseated.
- I am visually orientated and, because of this, vision may be my first sense to become over stimulated. Fluorescent lights hum and vibrate; the light appears to pulsate and distorts what I am seeing. The ceiling fans are on and there are so many people moving around. There are too many items for me to be able to focus (I may compensate with 'tunnel vision'). All this affects my vestibular sense, and now I can't even tell where my body is in space.

3. It isn't that I don't listen to instruction. It's that I can't understand you. When you call to me from across the room, this is what I hear: " \*&\$(@), Billy, %@^#&\$(@....." Instead, come over and speak directly to me in plain words: "Please put your book in your desk Billy. It's time to go to lunch." This tells me what you want me to do and what is going to happen next.

4. I am a very concrete thinker. I interpret language very literally. It's confusing for me when you say, "Hold your horses!" if what you really mean is, "Please stop running". Idioms, puns, nuance and sarcasm are lost on me.

5. Be patient with my limited vocabulary. It's hard for me to tell you what I need when I don't know

the words to describe my feelings. I may be hungry, frustrated, frightened or confused, but right now those words are beyond my ability to express.

Be alert for body language, withdrawal, agitation or other signs that something is wrong. There's a flip side to this: I may sound like a little professor or a movie star, rattling off words or whole scripts well beyond my developmental age. These are messages I have memorised from books, television or other people to compensate for my language deficits. I may not understand the context or the terminology I'm using.

6. Because language is so difficult for me and I am very visually oriented, show me how to do something rather than just telling me. Patient repetition helps me learn. A visual schedule is extremely helpful as I move through my day. It relieves me of the stress of having to remember what comes next and makes for smooth transitions between activities.

7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do. Like you, I can't learn if I'm constantly made to feel that I'm not good enough and that I need 'fixing'. Look for my strengths and you will find them. There is more than one right way to do most things.

8. Help me with social interactions. It may look as if I don't want to play with the other kids, but it's just that I simply don't know how to start a conversation or enter a play situation. Encourage other children to invite me to play football or basketball with them. It may be that I'm delighted to be included.

9. Try to identify what triggers my meltdowns. Meltdowns and blow-ups are even more horrible for me than they are for you. They occur because one or more of my senses has gone into overload. If you can figure why my meltdowns occur, they can be prevented.

10. View my autism as a different ability rather than a disability. Look past what you see as limitations and see the gifts autism has given me. I may not be good at eye contact or conversation, but have you noticed that I don't lie, cheat at games or pass judgement on other people? With my attention to fine detail and capacity for extraordinary focus, I might be the next Einstein, Mozart or Van Gough - they had autism too.

Be my advocate, be my friend and then we'll see just how far I can go!

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Ellen Notbohm is author of **Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew**, a ForeWord 2005 Book of the Year Honourable Mention winner. Her new book **Ten Things Your Student with Autism Wishes You Knew** is a 2006 iParenting Media Award recipient and will be released in October 2006. For article reprint permission, to learn more or to contact Ellen, please visit [www.ellennotbohm.com](http://www.ellennotbohm.com).

## Tell us about your special Pegasus Pony

Pegasus has been approached by an Australian publishing company that is about to develop a book titled "Smarter than Jack". The purpose is to show the public how smart animals are, leading to an increased respect for them and to raise funds for animal welfare as a percentage of sales will be donated back to animal charities throughout the world. The book will recognise the important role that working and service animals play in our lives and about 80 stories from all over the world will appear in the book.

The publishers have specifically written to Pegasus seeking stories about our horses and the confidence and independence they give to their riders. Stories should be between 100 and 1000 words, must be true and should be written from the human's point of view (not the horse's). Stories can be submitted to Pegasus and we will forward them on to the publisher. The deadline for your story is 2 October, so get writing and let's see if we can make our horses world famous!

## Calling all designers

The national Riding for the Disabled Association is currently running a design competition to develop a new logo for Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Ltd (RDAA). Budding and experienced designers are encouraged to develop a new logo for RDAA that describes the important role and activities of this well recognised national program. RDAA are inviting people from all backgrounds, ages and abilities to submit their logo ideas. Winners will win a return trip to Melbourne to attend the RDA Awards Dinner. To find out more about the competition visit the RDAA website at [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au) and click on the 'Create a Logo' page.

## Thanks to our Supporters

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

- Mark Patterson of Patterson's Rural Contracting
- Jack Laing of Bungendore Vet Surgery
- Ken, Rebecca and Mark at the Canberra Vet Hospital
- Ian Nielson of Ian Nielson and Associates Vet Centre.
- Harvey Excell
- Di Jenkins Equine Care
- Barb Vial
- Health Services Australia
- Canberra Freemasons
- O'Flaherty Family
- Mallesons Stephens and Jaques
- Colin Vivian (in memory of Harry Vivian)
- Graham Moss
- The Belconnen Trefoil Guild
- Lions Club of Belconnen
- Lions Club of Kambah
- The Lord Mayor's Fund (Eldon and Anne Foote Trust)
- Disability ACT
- The ACT and Commonwealth Departments of Education
- Manteena
- The volunteer Pegasus Management Committee
- The many, many volunteers who help to keep Pegasus operating!

## Pegasus in Action



*Volunteer, Ann, with Tom and his pony Mandy*



*Pegasus volunteer, Sheila King, at the ACT Volunteer of the Year Awards.*