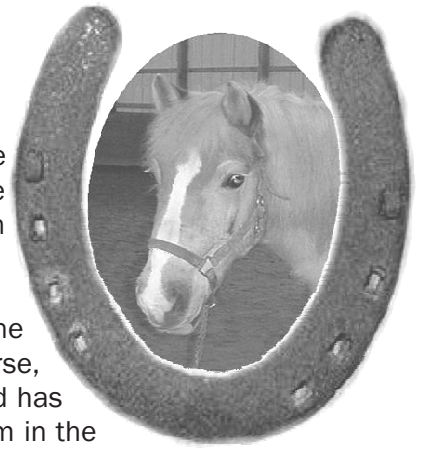


Crickett's Corner



This is the happiest time of the year for all of us horses! Our days and evenings are filled with riders and volunteers who give us attention and treats. We camp out in the pasture every night and stay in the cool barn during the day. Best of all, the hay is in for the year which means there will be plenty to eat all winter long.

There have been some wonderful new additions here at the barn. One is a horse, one is a person, and one is a strange but really neat piece of equipment. Our new horse, whose name was Cheyenne, came into the barn. She is a black and white Pinto and has pretty blue eyes. Because she is so elegant, we now call her Princess. We had room in the barn for Princess because my friend Blue went home to his owner. The new person at High

Hurdles is Erin Brauen, an instructor who joined Judy and Kelly in March. The new "thing" came into the arena early in July. I heard Judy call it a "SureHands Lift." I sure didn't see any hands on it, but it sounds like it's going to help some of our riders get onto their horses. Princess says that the riders can be lifted from a wheelchair and carefully placed on her back. I think it might be scary but Princess says she isn't afraid of it at all. She really likes knowing that her riders will feel more confident, safe and secure when they are getting on and off of her back.



Princess stands ready, awaiting the gentle placement of her rider, Joseph, assisted by the "SureHands Lift."

Erin told me that she would like to tell our readers what it is like becoming a High Hurdles instructor and also explain how this new lift works.

Erin joined the High Hurdles staff after graduating with a degree in journalism and equestrian studies. Below are some of her thoughts about her experiences with High Hurdles.

I find it truly inspiring how many people the High Hurdles horses touch. I have worked around horses for a long time, but they still find ways to amaze me. The High Hurdles horses are definitely amazing. They are like wise teachers. For example, Maggie teaches soft hands, Penny teaches patience and Princess teaches confidence. For the short time that I've been with High Hurdles, I have learned so much. Helping to teach is a lot of responsibility, but it's definitely worth it. I love it when the riders smile and I know that they are having fun.

It's also exciting to be at High Hurdles now that the SureHands Lift has been installed. This is a huge leap for High Hurdles as a therapeutic riding facility. The lift provides a simple and dignified way for riders who are very physically challenged to get on and off horseback. My first encounter with the lift involved me being lifted...new kid on the block, you know! The lift was comfortable and secure. My second encounter was holding Princess while a rider was transferred from his wheelchair onto her back for his lesson. The smiles on the faces of both the rider and his father seemed to portray the enthusiasm that we all feel with the addition of the lift to the facility.



New comers, Princess and Erin in the pasture.

I am very impressed with the riders' independence at High Hurdles. They are true horse people. They are striving to reach personal goals and to improve their horsemanship. I'm glad to be part of this growing experience.

For more information about becoming a rider, volunteer, or supporter of High Hurdles, please contact Judy Feine (716)496-5551 or by e-mail at: hhurdles@sasinc.org.