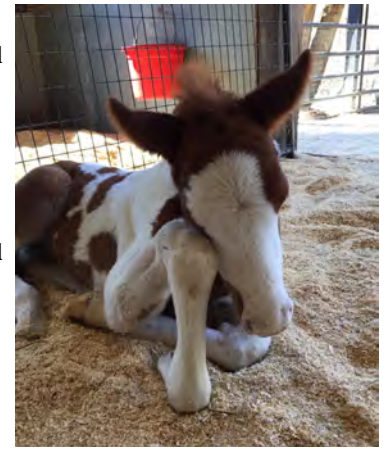




Victoria and Dr. Rourke

By the time evening would arrive, (You know, that time when you'd like to call it a day; sit down and enjoy a meal, put your feet up and relax?), Dr. Rourke would pull in. After a full day at her own Veterinary practice, she would close up her clinic for the night and head over to LCC. Yes, every night--often staying into the wee hours to care for especially sick foals. Somewhere in between sunset and midnight, I'd make up some human food for the three of us and we would manage to take a few precious moments to enjoy a bit of sustenance and a weary chuckle or two.. Then it was off to the meds, milk and monitoring again. I hardly ever remember going to bed each night yet, somehow, I managed to wake up there.



Meanwhile, outside our little world, COVID-19 continued to spread, seemingly unabated, that meant Rebecca (my sister) would have to work from home. Our online presence is critical to reach potential adopters and donors, this is Rebecca's dept along with everything computer (including designing this letter). She would only come to the farm to take photos and produce the "short horse" clips (get it? Short horse.) to whet the appetites of future foal adopters and hopefully inspire them to apply. It is also important that our donors can see our ongoing work and continue to make it possible for these foals to become available for adoption as opposed to the other possible outcome which always lingers in the back of our minds, driving us forward. As most of you know, I'm a pen and paper kind of gal, but with Rebecca forced to do her work from home, staying connected was a challenge. She fields all emails, scrutinizing all adoption requests, making sure they followed our website instructions, then vetting them as thoroughly as possible to be sure that they live where they said they live, the photos of their farm match satellite imagery, and vet and farrier references are in order with no issues of animal abuse or neglect. You'd probably not be surprised by some of the thinly veiled lies we have received over the years. Some even border on the comical. We



Victoria in the milk room.

actually have a file committed for just such amusing applications. Once given the stamp of approval, Rebecca would send information back to us at the farm, and the pending adopters would be added to our list. Annie and I would take it from there.

It was an absolutely UN-ordinary, difficult foal season and not as many foals were able to pass through our gates. Many factors contributed to this, but most were pandemic generated complications. Out of the 76 foals arriving, four came to us with catastrophic injuries requiring humane euthanasia. No one looks forward to these events, but it is part of the reality that comes with this line of work. Sometimes the only rescue is rescuing them from further pain and suffering. But we don't have time to dwell in the realm of sadness--we know that we did all that could be done for them in life. You must rally your useful energy for the living; those that need your attention NOW. As a result of our fortitude in the face of adversity, we can be proud that 72 foals found homes this year.

The rest of the year hasn't been a sing-along-by-the-campfire, either, but I have given it my best. I managed to do many major repairs and renovations at the farm, fencing, milk room floor and substructure and on and on. All work on our "second-hand tack store" was simply put on hold, my days spent shoveling, sawing, hammering...working as hard as a 1950's Ford tractor chugging along and getting the job DONE--until my body quits on me (lazy old body...). I work hard to the best job I can. But the best part...I don't charge myself much and I am fairly certain that I won't be fired!

*Looking ahead, I cannot say what the 2021 Foal Season will bring. Like everyone else, the pandemic has had a devastating effect on our resources. Any Spring and Summer fundraising opportunities that we could have participated in were cancelled. Many of our donors have suffered financial setbacks, leaving them unable to help. I am concerned that we are already well into our "rainy day" funds.*

*I will say this, I don't generally come right out and ask (it's just not my style) but I will put aside my pride. I need to. If you are in a position to help, please do. Before January comes, I need to secure the funding for this coming foal season's success.*

*I will leave you with my warmest wishes for health and happiness for you and yours during this season and the year to come. There is no time more fitting than the holidays to give pause and reflect gratefully upon the folks and the creatures who make our lives meaningful. If you need to find me, you know where I'll be...right here working in the foal barn.*

*Victoria*

"It is never wrong to do the right thing"

~Mark Twain



Pictured below are our regular team members pre-COVID . They were seriously missed when the "shelter in place" order was put in place in March. We are hopeful that they will all be back with us this year.



Karrinda and Karen "Karibou"

Quinn

Karen "Xena"



And so it is time that we bid adieu to 2020. Be well, be kind and play like a little kid!