

Alberta Donkey and Mule Club News, Feb. 2008

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Sunday, March 2, Alberta Reynolds Museum, Wetaskiwin, AB. 12:30 Dinner, Meeting to follow at 1:30. Please contact Ethel at 403 783-3083 for more details. Everyone Welcome! We have a full slate of coming events that you will want to sign up for and this is the best way to be sure you get a spot and get the information that you need.

The following is story is submitted by one of our members. Please consider sharing "your" stories with us! Colleen writes...

I am uncertain as to where my love for donkeys first came from but I can vividly remember my first encounter with them. During a trip to Las Vegas we took a drive into the surrounding area and encountered the dessert burros. A burro attempting to get the last of the crumbs in a bag of the U.S. version of popcorn twists captivated me. The burros were so docile and their eyes were so warm and kind looking. That was it! I was hooked!

A few years later I acquired a young jack. We named him Shimmering Tinsel. Our intent was to have him gelded but my husband was opposed to the idea. So Tinsel, as we called him, stayed intact.

With the arrival of sheep to our farm we now needed a guard donkey. Although we were aware that an intact jack was not the best choice to guard sheep, Tinsel was given a short chance to prove otherwise. Tinsel did not harm any sheep but there were a few tufts of wool missing. Tinsel was then moved in with the cows and that was where he shined. Those cows became his girls. We never lost one calf to coyotes.

Even though Tinsel was a jack, he was very easy to handle. Calling his name ensured he would come running. Unfortunately, Tinsel's life was too short. A picture of him, in which he is covered in frost, still sits on my desk today.

Our search then began for a jenny. After numerous trips we found one. Jenny's name was changed to Blossom Mania but we just ended up calling her Blossom. And that she has. It took a long time for Blossom to trust us as I believe she had very limited human exposure prior to knowing us.

Arriving in February, Blossom was very frightened when I came to do chores and was wearing a different coat. She took one look at the farrier and decided she would have nothing to do with him and with a turn quick on her haunches she was off to the far end of the pasture. Blossom now stands patiently for her regular trims and pushes on the gate when she wants to go to a different pasture. There was a time when she was unwilling to leave the pasture.

In the spring we were surprised and pleased to observe Blossom's udder swelling. Jake Daniels was born one early Saturday morning. Oh my, how those foals are so cute. Blossom has since given us two more babies, Legacy of Tinsel, sired by Shimmering Tinsel and Princess Willow, sired by Cherokee.

I have been fortunate to attend several clinics, taught by Tim Barton, Brad Cameron, and Brian and Colleen Coleman. Attending these clinics gave me the courage to take Blossom and Legacy of Tinsel to Tees Longears Days in August 2007 and in September, of the same year, Blossom went to Spruce Meadows as a member of the breed demo team. What a great experience for both Blossom and me!

Each clinic I have attended has offered a lot of valuable information and experiences. I would encourage inexperienced donkey and mule owners to embrace new adventures and be open to learning from knowledgeable people who work with these wonderful creatures.

As a horse owner I was already involved with mainstream equestrian programs including taking riding lessons and attending a few shows. But this love of another equine has taught me so much more. One clinician told me to "accept even the slightest response". To this day I never forget those words.

Each of my donkeys has their own distinct personality and each has added to my learning curve. Becoming a member of the donkey and mule club has allowed me to continue learning and meeting down to earth people.

I hope you enjoy the attached photos.

Colleen Campbell, ADMC member from Camrose, AB.



Colleens donkeys, left to right, Blossom, Princess Willow, Jake Daniels, Legacy of Tinsel



Blossom with the farrier



Blossom and Colleen at the Mane Event in Red Deer, last April