

*Monday* IT'S THE SMALL STUFF... *Wednesday*  
*Tuesday* *Friday* *Thursday*

By Michelle Harrison  
 Director of Community Relations & Riding Instructor

Imagine driving in the right hand lane. You're cruising along conservatively at 70 miles an hour, respecting the unwritten 5-to-10-miles-over rule, of course. Traffic is moving, but it's still back-to-back. In the corner of your eye you see someone's turn signal flashing, desperately trying to get into your lane. You look to the right and see an exit coming up fast and realize you're between this person and the exit.

You have the power to decide if this desperate driver in his shiny new Mercedes Benz makes his turn or not. What do you do? Does this person make his turn, and his appointment, or does he get to drive another three miles to the next exit?

Working at Camelot has taught me many lessons, but one of the most important is that it is the small stuff that can make life wonderful. For example, on Mondays I teach Kristen, She's 18-years-old and has a movement disorder of unknown origin. One day we were doing an exercise called Around the World. During this exercise the student sits in all directions on horseback while someone leads the horse. The student will ride sideways, backwards, sideways and then back to front while learning about the different movements of the horse. I suppose this exercise should be

called Around the Horse!

With some of our students, we practice flying dismounts after returning from their trip around the world. When the horse is at a walk, and the rider is seated sideways, the rider slides off the side of the horse. This teaches two things: the distance from the horse's back to the ground and how to land on ones' feet.

Kristen, naturally, was apprehensive. Most people are when they're told to jump off of a moving horse! But we discussed the process and she decided to trust me. She landed beautifully and also learned a third lesson: that she actually liked dismounting sideways. This moment forever changed her style of dismount.

Kristen took a leap of faith.

On Tuesdays I have had the pleasure

of teaching Amy. Her goal is to show dressage, the closest thing to dancing with horses. Amy's disability isn't apparent, but she has Autodisnomia, a neurological disorder that causes

seizures.

Unfortunately, and fortunately, I only taught Amy for a couple of months, but one of our last lessons together was amazing.

We were working in the arena, and having a terrific lesson, so I told her she could canter her horse, Scout, for the first time. With Scout, this is no easy task. I always joke that Scout would rather stop and eat the flowers than smell them; stopping, and

eating, he does very well. After much encouragement and proper incentive from Amy, Scout transitioned into the canter. And for a brief moment, horse and rider were one. Wind in her face, body moving in motion with her horse,

*(Continued on page 2)*



Bravo and Kristen

"Ah, fair lady," answered Balin, "worthiness and brave deeds are

(Continued from page 1)

horse carrying rider with every stride farther down the arena rail with grace and speed. It was a beautiful moment of triumph.

Shortly after this ride, Amy called and was very sad. She said wouldn't be able to ride at Camelot, because she was given a gift. Her significant other found a dressage trainer who would work with her, in spite of her challenges, and would take her to the show ring.

We were all so happy to hear her good news. After all, Camelot truly is a bridge leading to a life of independence and freedom. Sometimes the bridge is a journey, other times it is just a short walk to the other side.

Amy took the next step.

On Wednesdays, I teach Jessica. She is a college student at Arizona State University, and like Amy, she also has a passion for dressage. This year she is riding Paladin, the largest horse in Camelot's barn. We have had some challenges trying to find the right mix of equipment and riding techniques so that Jessica can ride independently. She uses a wheelchair, and she has had some challenges with balancing her upper body when she lifts her hands off the saddle to steer. We found a solution, however, and she has been working very hard on perfecting this new technique.

Last week, Jessica steered, walked, stopped, turned, rode through cones, rode over poles, all completely independent from anything other than verbal support from her instructor. It was so beautiful to see horse and rider together in concert, dancing in harmony with each other. I was almost moved to tears. I knew she worked so hard for that moment of true independence.

Jessica rode by herself.

Thursdays, I teach the teens in our Leadership through Horsemanship program. The kids are working very hard on preparing a riding demonstration that they are choreographing and performing for next years' HOOVES & HEROES event on April 1st. The group has been scrutinizing music to use for the performance. Each of them has very different tastes in music, so it has been a challenge for them to be in accord. So much music, so little time! Last week, volunteers said that their cheers, hoots and hollers echoed loud and clear through the barn, as they celebrated choosing the perfect

music. The teens and I were in the meeting room. With the door closed. They truly put



Kara, left, and Jessica

forth a group effort and all loved each carefully chosen song.

They worked as a team and felt the music.

As the very popular coffee table book of the 1990s reminds us, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff. I agree, but as Camelot has taught me, it's the small stuff that helps define us. The small stuff molds us in profound ways. It's the small decisions, choices and moments that create the larger picture.

So as you may have guessed, I was the driver cruising along at 70 in the slow lane. I did back off and let the desperate Mercedes driver make his turn. And you know what he did? He waved. I smiled, knowing that I made his day just a little bit better. And perhaps he will grant someone else some small favor that may just change their life forever.



## CANTERING SCOUT

By Amy M. La Broad



I like to Canter Scout.

For that, there is no doubt.

Was it easy or smooth? No, I need to improve.

Scout was willing, but I needed the key.

Find the right cue and the canter shall be.

At last! Success! We are cantering indeed.

Oh, how smooth, this handsome steed.

I didn't want to stop, but I began to flop.

So we made a downward transition,

my body not quite in position.

However, we had done it for all to see.

We cantered our circle, Scout ,

just you and me.

## CAMELOT REMEMBERS

Mary Giolitto



Verna Louise Laurila

Wilma Ryckmen-Brooks

Charles Westheimer

Sis Hiller Wolf

## GIVEN IN HONOR OF

Jack & Paula Strickstein's  
Golden Anniversary

*Memorial gifts in any amount are a beautiful way to honor a beloved friend or family member, be they human or otherwise. We also welcome gifts in honor of birthdays or other special events. All such donations are acknowledged with a special card and a mention in our newsletter.*

not shown by fair raiment, but manhood and truth lie hid within the

# NIFTY BITS

News From the Ranch

Welcome to the many new students we have this year! They include **Lynn Houston, Winston Howell, Eric Joslyn, Kristen Kawam, Amy La Broad, Richard Maraj, Cheryl Rapp, Chantal Riba, Danielle Riba** and **Katie Swain**.

Welcome to our new volunteers **Jeanne Johnson, Brad Kirschman, Paul Konorich** and **Tyler Pitrat**. Thank you for working so hard for our program. Welcome to the Round Table!

Thank you to **Webster Veterinary Supply Inc.** (previously Milburn Distribution) for continuing to care for the health of our equine staff. It has been an honor to be remembered through your year of transition. Scout, Mack, Paladin, Bravo, Cayanna, Sandy and the Camelot community all offer our sincere appreciation.

Thanks to **Patrick Meeker** and **The ROHO Group** for the amazing cushions for our saddles! They provide a more comfortable and safer ride for many of our students. The cushions also make it possible for some to ride in saddle longer.

Thank you, **Bernie Deutsch** with **Deutsch Associates**, and his team, **Flo Belo** and **Bob Smith**, for leading the way. Your expertise, guidance and support is truly appreciated.

Thank you **Danielle**, 11, and **Chantal**, 9, for donating your allowance and remember to send the elevator back down!

Thank you, **Kate Crimmins**, for chairing this year's HOOVES & HEROES Event. We are so excited about the talent and energy you are bring to the table. Also, a special thanks to **Judi Lewis** and **Brad Kirschman** for being team leaders and kick starting our planning and fundraising efforts. We are confident that this year's event will be better than ever!

**Would you like to join the HOOVES & HEROES committee?** Would you like to donate a silent auction item or donate frequent flyer miles? If so, please call Michelle Harrison at (480) 515-1543. I would be happy to help!

Many grocery stores support nonprofit organizations when you link a charity of choice to your discount card. For example, you can earn funds for Camelot every time you use your Thank You Card at **Bashas'** by linking our ID number to your card. **Camelot's Bashas' Group ID Number is 27573.**


To **Conquistador**, the amazing Peruvian Paso horse who has defied all odds, his "parents," **Bill and Patricia Haight, P.h.D.**, who sponsored our holiday volunteer event, his rider, **Meagan C. Killoren**, who performed beautifully, **Jeanne Sullivan** and photographer **Pamela Reed**. Thank you so much for leading the dance into the holiday season!

Find us on the web at [www.camelot-th.org](http://www.camelot-th.org).



## HOWDY!

Mark your calendar  
~  
**APRIL 1, 2006!**  
~  
Come celebrate our  
annual event  
**HOOVES & HEROES!**



Enjoy the Not So Silent Auction, food, entertainment and a musical riding demonstration performed by three of Camelot's riders!

**Celebratin' HOOVES & HEROES!**  
Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship

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**Publisher & Photographer**  
Mary Hadsall

**Editors**  
Michelle Harrison & Mary Westheimer

**Guest Photographer**  
Karen Kawam

**Little Chicken**  
Teri Barton

## HEROES' HEROES ~ HEROES' HEROES ~ HEROES' HEROES

### The LoCascio Love Affair...

On any given Thursday afternoon, while walking into the Camelot meeting room, you will undoubtedly smell the sweet perfume of fresh cut flowers. And inevitably, you will also find Lynne LoCascio, the bearer of the light flowery sent. Lynne's love affair with Camelot began in 2003. It truly is a love affair, because Lynne offers our students and horses something far beyond good horsemanship. Her patience, thoughtfulness and perseverance are an act of love.

Lynne is an experienced horsewoman and equine masseuse, but



her riding needs changed because she developed Multiple Sclerosis. During a tour with the MS Society, she witnessed a riding demonstration by one of our students who has MS, and was inspired in another direction. She decided that instead of taking riding lessons, she would give back to the program through volunteerism.

Then one day something in the

barn needed to be fixed, and Lynne let the secret out of the bag about her talented husband, **Sal LoCascio**. Chore-by-chore, we pulled him in, and before he knew what happened, we made him an honorary volunteer handyman! Sal is a skilled carpenter and his handiwork is displayed throughout the barn in the form of

plaques, signs, shelves, our offside mounting ramp and even stick ponies. If it's broken, Sal can fix it. If it doesn't exist, he can create it.

These two wonderful people have been a continual source of support and joy to all who need them. Thank you, Lynne and Sal, for all you both do for Camelot!



heart. There be many worshipful knights unknown to all the people."



# MERLIN'S MUSE

Recently my mentor, Eileen Szychowski, shared a memory with me. She had watched a television program years ago that featured a Hispanic woman whose life's work focused on minority woman's rights. During the program Eileen remembered her saying, *"When you have struggled so hard to get to the top floor, you have to remember to send the elevator back down."* This powerful message stayed with Eileen and is part of the foundation from which Camelot was built and is part of the spirit of our Creed.

Obstacles come in many shapes, forms and fashions. For Julieanne, a Camelot alumna, short term memory, muscle coordination and balance are just a few of them. Julieanne's challenges came to her following surgery in 1998 when, at the age of 13, she had a cancerous brain tumor removed. Life brought an unexpected twist to this teen. The days, months and years following tested her, but did not dampen her spirit and enthusiasm for life. Some of the dragons she had to slay were relearning verbal and processing skills when other teens her age were worrying about fashion and boys.

During Julieanne's first lesson season at Camelot, we all,

including equine staff, wore nametags every week to assist her. Her horse, Scout, worked with her to increase her balance and coordination, as well as develop muscle strength. It was from the back of a horse that this young rider discovered a freedom unknown to her since her surgery. During her second year of riding, her horse, Mack, showed her the thrill of the sitting the trot. That same year she turned 18 and graduated from high school.

In March of last year, a surprise awaited me in the mail. I opened a note addressed to Camelot. It was from Julieanne. Her life had once again changed. She moved with her family to Colorado. Julieanne's message, written in her own handwriting, was not a long one -- only three sentences to be exact. But each sentence was filled with appreciation and inspiration, and came directly from her heart. She thanked Camelot for everything we had done for her, she said she was doing great in Colorado, even working two part-time jobs. Included in the envelope was a donation to Camelot from her personal checking account, again written in her hand. For Julieanne the circle was complete. She remembered to send the elevator back down.

Thank you, Julieanne. I will continue to share your message and your inspiration.

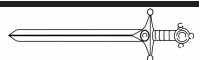
Mary Hadsall  
Executive Director



CAMELOT Therapeutic Horsemanship, Inc.  
23623 N. Scottsdale Road, Suite D-3, PMB 259  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255  
(480) 515-1542 [www.camelot-th.org](http://www.camelot-th.org)



"Take up your sword against the dragon within...the voice that says, 'I can't.'"



# Help Camelot turn dreams into reality and dreamers into doers by becoming a Champion of the Round Table.

YES! I wish to take my seat at the Round Table:

- \$\_\_\_\_ Friend of Camelot
- \$250 Squire
- \$500 Knight
- \$1,000–4,999 Defender of the Realm
- \$5,000–9,999 Benefactor
- \$10,000–Above Guardian Angel



My annual contribution is enclosed.

Please notify me annually at this time (or \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)

A partial contribution is enclosed. Please send me a reminder for the balance due \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_.

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*Thank you very much!*



Camelot is a nonprofit charitable organization. All donations are tax deductible.

23623 N. Scottsdale Road, Suite D-3, PMB 259 Scottsdale, AZ 85255 • TEL: (480) 515-1542

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