

Molly the Pony Romps to a New Role in Life...on Three Legs

I've written plenty of articles over the years about horses who survived amputation surgery. There was Boitron, the California Thoroughbred stallion who could service mares after amputation surgery. There were Dr. Ric Redden's dramatic cases of founder survivors who galloped around his paddock on artificial feet with "transplanted frogs". Dr. Chris Colles had the never-sa

y-die Appaloosa in England with the spring-loaded foot. And who can forget that paint yearling in India? Or the landmine-maimed elephant amputee in Thailand? Longtime *Hoofcare and Lameness Journal* readers will remember them all.



Now, my friends, meet Molly. She's a gray-speckled "POA" pony who was abandoned by her owners when Katrina hit southern Louisiana. She spent weeks on her own before finally being rescued and taken to a farm where abandoned animals were stockpiled. While there, she was attacked by a pit bull terrier, and almost died. Her gnawed right front leg became infected and her vet went to LSU for help. But LSU was overwhelmed, and this pony was a welfare case. You know how that goes.

But after surgeon Rustin Moore met Molly, he changed his mind. He saw how the pony was careful to lie down on different sides so she didn't seem to get sores, and how she allowed people to handle her. She protected her injured leg. She constantly shifted her weight, and didn't overload her good leg. She was a smart pony with a serious survival ethic.

Moore agreed to remove her leg below the knee and a temporary artificial limb was built. Molly walked out of the clinic and her story really begins there.

"This was the right horse and the right owner," Moore insists. "Molly happened to be a one-in-a-million patient. She's tough as nails, but sweet, and she was willing to cope with pain.

She made it obvious she understood (that) she was in trouble.” The other important factor, according to Moore, is having a truly committed and compliant owner who is dedicated to providing the daily care required over the lifetime of the horse.

Molly’s story turns into a parable for life in post-Katrina Louisiana. The little pony gained weight, her mane felt a comb. A human prosthesis designer built her a leg.

“The prosthetic has given Molly a whole new life,” Allison Barca DVM, Molly's regular vet, reports. “And she asks for it! She will put her little limb out, and come to you and let you know that she wants you to put it on. Sometimes she wants you to take it off too.” And sometimes, Molly gets away from Barca. “It can be pretty bad when you can't catch a three-legged horse,” she laughs.

Most important of all, Molly has a job now. Kay, the rescue farm owner, started taking Molly to shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers. Anywhere she thought that people needed hope. Wherever Molly went, she showed people her pluck. She inspired people. And she had a good time doing it.

“It’s obvious to me that Molly had a bigger role to play in life,” Moore said, “She survived the hurricane, she survived a horrible injury, and now she is giving hope to others.”

“She's not back to normal,” Barca concluded. “She's going to be better. To me, she could be a symbol for New Orleans itself.”

This week, *Molly the Pony*, a children’s book about the pony who has already inspired thousands of people around New Orleans, has been published.

It’s not a book about amputation or prosthetics, it’s a book about people and ponies. But the photos you see here are a few of the great ones from the book.

Maybe Molly won’t make the vet textbooks, but she might reach more people from the pages of this book for children. If you know a child, a library, a hospital, or maybe a therapeutic riding program that can use a lift, here’s a book that can do that. And you can explain how the leg and hoof work!

HOW TO ORDER: This book is an oversized, square "laminated" (so it wipes clean) hard cover book. It will arrive in a large, flat mailer and may not fit in your mailbox.

Hoofcare Publishing is proud to offer it for sale to you at the price of \$15.95 each plus \$6 post. A portion of the sales price will go toward Molly's fund.

[Click here](#) for our faxable, mailable, printable order form.

To order by mail, send check or money to Hoofcare Books, 19 Harbor Loop, Gloucester MA 01930.

To order by phone, call in orders to (USA) 978 281 3222 .

To order by fax, transmit orders to (USA) 978 283 8775 .

EMAIL orders to directly books@hoofcare.com or franjurga@earthlink.net. Visa or Mastercard accepted; please supply account number and expiration date. When ordering, please give phone and/or email details.

You will LOVE this book--and Molly!

PS Many, many thanks to all the people who are forwarding the link to this story around the web. This has been the most popular story ever posted on this blog, and deservedly so.

We have added it to the permanent book offerings on our web site. Interesting to note: almost everyone who has called was ordering as a gift for a child with some sort of a hurdle to overcome. It is the perfect gift for that...and I am so moved by the stories that callers have told me. Thank you, everyone. This is truly a "grassroots" effort since neither the university nor I has the funds to properly promote Molly and her story. She's an underground classic!



This is Molly's most recent prosthesis. The bottom photo shows the ground surface that she stands on, which has a smiley face embossed in it. Wherever Molly goes, she leaves a smiley hoof print behind!



Here's Molly at her new job! In the book you will see her with children in wheelchairs. She's just the right height to look them in the eye!

All HoofBlog text and images © Hoofcare Publishing 2008 unless otherwise noted. Molly's photos from the book MOLLY THE PONY by Pam Kaster. Most photos of Molly are © Pam Kaster.

Web page on MOLLY THE PONY book: <http://www.hoofcare.com/mollythepony.html>

To learn more about new research, products, and treatments for the horse's hooves and legs as reported to veterinarians and farriers in the award-winning "Hoofcare & Lameness Journal",

go to <http://www.hoofcare.com>

Direct "subscribe now" link to Hoofcare & Lameness Journal: <http://www.hoofcare.com/subscribe.html>

Contact Hoofcare Publishing anytime:

tel **978 281 3222** fax 978 283 8775 email bloginquiry@hoofcare.com

hoofcare.blogspot.com/2008/03/pony-romps-to-new-role-in-lifeon-three.html