

Horses, Naturally

Leo came to the sanctuary in June this year; I found him in a pasture with some cows. He's 30ish, blind in one eye, foundered in two of his feet, and when we found him was severely underweight and had a terrible case of rain rot.

For the past several months we have been feeding him 5 times a day, treating his skin condition and trying to ease the pain in his feet and joints. I'm happy to say he's looking and feeling much better. He just recently started getting a little snotty when we feed him – his ears will go back and if he could move fast enough he'd probably run over you. It's nice to see him getting his personality back – until now he was so grateful for the food he never thought of being cranky about it.

With him being in such poor shape I couldn't put him with any of the other horses because he wouldn't be able to defend himself. Consequently he's been living in our yard since we rescued him.

In August I accepted a retiree horse. I usually don't do this because we are not a retirement facility; we are here for horses in need of rescue. This particular case was special because the family had no choice. Royal is her name, she's a 34 year old quarter horse mare; she is going blind but otherwise pretty healthy. My plan was to take this mare and put her with a group of horses at our other property. When I saw this gentle old soul I knew where she needed to be...

Those of you, who know horses, know that they all have a pecking order and they usually do some sorting out whenever you put a new horse in the mix. In my experience it's usually pretty frenetic and can

be quite violent with certain horses. When I took Royal off the trailer, Leo was right there to see who the new girl was.

Get out the vet wrap and duct tape because the fireworks are about to begin!

As predicted she immediately started driving him around the yard. Now you really have to use your imagination and picture this.

Imagine two really old people, one with a cane (Leo) and one with a walker (Royal); now imagine the one in the walker chasing the one with the cane. It was the slowest chase I have ever seen! They never got past a walk; they never broke a sweat or even touched each other. Royal would walk toward him and if he didn't walk fast enough she'd pin her ears and he'd give it a little more effort. She never even lifted her head above her withers!! It was hilarious to watch!

They eventually got tired and started eating grass together and have been inseparable ever since. If Leo gets out of her sight Royal will call to him until she finds him. He's a typical guy though... he won't answer her; he lets her wander around calling until she runs into him. Sometimes I think he hides from her on purpose!

We now have two horses in the yard.....



Sixteen Hands Horse Sanctuary is a 501 © 3 non-profit equine rescue. We give Lifetime homes to horses that have no other option. For more information call 941-232-0081 or email robin@sixteenhands-horsesanctuary.org.