

"A Dream Come True"

By Diane Johnston

All my life I wanted a horse. When I was six or seven-years-old, I would pray every night that a pony would appear in the back yard. As I got older, I would ride any horse I could rent. My dream was to have a small ranch with my own horse.

Time passed and I got married, had a baby, got divorced. I had no money and no opportunity to get a horse. In 1983 I remarried. When we went on vacation, I rented a horse to ride. I found a stable that conducted trail rides near my hometown of Galeton, and I rode as often as I could.

In 1990 I had an opportunity to buy a five-year-old, green, broke Tennessee Walker. I boarded her at a stable some distance from my house and tried desperately to be able to ride her. My husband and I were in way over our heads. When Ken ended up in the

hospital with a concussion, we got rid of the horse. Even though it was a problem horse, it broke my heart to part with her. I had read every book and magazine article I could find to try and be successful.

For the next 13 years I continued to rent horses when I could. I tried next to cultivate people who had horses. If you had a horse, I wanted to be your new best friend. I even coerced my pastor into letting me ride his horses.

Years passed and the dream of having a horse began to die a very painful death. Visiting pastors would talk about not letting your dream die, but I couldn't imagine how it would ever come to pass. I got so I couldn't look at horses out in the field; I stopped going to horse shows. I couldn't see horses without feeling an ache in my heart. I knew I couldn't keep a horse at home, and I couldn't figure out how to sell my house and

move to where I could keep horses. I knew I needed someone to help me start from the beginning again. I had been thrown, bitten, and stomped so many times. I was actually afraid of horses, but I knew my love for horses could help me overcome my fears.

In August 2003 I was at Georgia Wiles' house. She showed me the creek behind her house and told me her dream since she was a little girl was to have a house with a stream behind it. God had blessed her with that house. I told her that maybe for me that horse might not be so far away after all. I started declaring that there was a horse in the driveway and it was mine! In September as I was driving to work, it struck me that I could just ask God for the horse. I continued to pray and remind God that I didn't have that horse yet.

In November my daughter told me that her boss wanted to give me his horse. I was dumbfounded and finally came to - - enough to ask her for details. She knew I had wanted a horse. Although she was telling me he wanted to give me the horse, in the end she purchased the horse for me for Christmas. I wanted to go to State College to see him, but the circumstances were never right. The owner needed to sell the horse by January as he was moving. I had a phone number that I had cut out of the newspaper years ago advertising Full Moon Stables. I called the owner and she said she had room to board him. Although I never saw him beforehand, I told my daughter I would take the horse.

He arrived on a very cold, January morning looking somewhat pathetic. He had not been well taken care of and was thin and dirty, but to me he was beautiful. He was a thoroughbred. By tracing the tattoo in his upper lip, I found that he had come from a

horse farm on Long Island and raced at the track in Belmont. With good care and proper feeding, he has become a beautiful animal.

He is very patient, very good-natured, and very agreeable. Together he and I began lessons. I learned all the basics from the beginning and have overcome the difficulties I had before. I even help feed and take care of the other horses at the barn where he is stabled. He is trained to perform in the ring, and it has been great fun finding out what he knows how to do. I know this horse is from God. I am grateful every day for him. His official name is Carlisle Castle, but I call him Jericho!