



November 2022 Issue 25

CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE: JONI HOUSE



Tess and Joni

If you've been around for classes this spring, summer or fall, you may have seen a Harley Davidson FreeWheeler (Trike) in the parking lot. The lucky person who drives that is Joni House (pronounced "Johnny"), and she is our volunteer of the month for November.

Joni grew up in the Battle Creek-Kalamazoo area and attended MSU after graduating from high school. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Clinical Lab Science and worked in the Bronson Lab as a laboratory technician for 15 years. After that, she went into Lab Information Systems and managed the IT department for 14 years. While

working, she travelled extensively throughout the Western hemisphere.

Joni came here because the horse stables where she worked had closed; her childhood dream was to work with horses. She started volunteering with us in 2021, and has logged many hours not only in classes, but working the entire week preparing for Shindig, working the Shindig event, helping with the Read and Ride camp and classes, and on occasion, the Veteran's program.

Joni currently works at Pine Meadows farms three days a week, and volunteers at Cheff most of the day on Thursdays. She loves being at Cheff because it incorporates two of her favorite things: horses and people! She loves the unique experience of working with the clients that ride here, and she loves being part of this very special thing that happens at Cheff.

Joni has been married for 30 years, and she and her husband have made a mission to visit all the best and well-known burger joints in Michigan on their bikes - we're guessing that could be a never-ending mission! She is also an avid reader and is one of her Aunt Sally's caretakers.

Joni's favorite horses at Cheff are Garth and Willy. She loves learning about the horses and their behavior and finds Willy an interesting study on that subject.

If you are here on Thursdays, please introduce yourself to Joni - she has a great sense of humor and is a great conversationalist. Thanks for all you do, Joni!



We are so thankful for your service!

HORSE OF THE MONTH – SIMON



Simon Blue Eyes!

Say hello to Simon, our new official addition to the Cheff herd! Simon arrived at Cheff this July, on a lease from his very generous mom.

Simon is an 11-year-old American Paint Horse, with the most striking bright blue eyes; he stands about 16 hands high. Simon is a retired show horse, and the word in the barn is that he holds a world title or two in showmanship and/or halter!

Simon has quite the personality; he is a relaxed guy and is slowly learning how to become just a horse. He's also learning to live outside for most of his time, which includes experiencing the elements - and learning how to go through puddles!

Since Simon has navicular syndrome, he requires special front shoes, pain management, and joint injections as needed. The Ladies of the Barn are taking good care of him, and his mother, who

loves him very much, has a place waiting for him to live out his retired life with her.

Simon does not discriminate against any snacks; all are thoroughly enjoyed. Make sure you welcome him when you see him in the barn!



Sassy Simon



TIME CHANGE IS 2am SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH

HERD UPDATE:

Our old friend **SKY** is enjoying his retirement with his new herd, a weanling, and a yearling, at the home of two of our volunteers. He looks happy watching over the youngsters!



AWESOME is returning to his previous owner on the 12th since he is still not fully recovered from EPM. If anyone wants to say goodbye to this well-loved horse, make sure to do so before the 12th. Enjoy your retirement, Awesome, you earned it!

WILLIE is on vacation with his owner, and we hope to have him back in the near future.



CALLING ALL HORSES!

As mentioned above, some of our horses have retired lately. Cheff is always looking for the right horse to join their herd. Please take a look at [What we look for in a horse](#) to see if you know any great horses that would qualify.

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT THE JEWELRY IN THE HALLWAY? "Designs by Sara" are handmade, original-design earrings made with nickel-free metal, stones, wood, gemstones, etc. Great for Christmas gifts! Some bracelets and necklaces may be coming in the near future 😊



AND...40% of the purchase price is donated to the Cheff Center!

KALAMAZOO GROWLERS CONCESSION STAND HELP NEEDED

for WMU Football, Hockey, and Basketball home games!

Volunteer shifts are approximately 4-6 hours, and count toward volunteer hours. You'll get to see the games for free, Cheff gets \$80 per person that shows up, and you'll have a lot of fun! Bring your family and friends--you don't have to be an official Cheff volunteer to help.

If interested, please contact [Sara Putney-Smith](#), so she can keep track of volunteers/hours.

EDUCATION CORNER

The Horse Family - Part Two: From Eohippus to the Modern Horse Species



This is a companion article to last month's *A Look at the Horse Family*, which discussed how the horse family, called Equidae, is scientifically classified and how species names, such as *Equus ferus*, are constructed.

This month, we'll take a brief look at the evolution of the horse family and then zoom in on the living horse species. In a future article, we'll spotlight the other species in the modern horse family: donkeys, wild asses and zebras.

55 Million Years Ago ...

The earliest equid (equid refers to any member of the Equidae family, living or extinct) is thought to have lived about 55 million years ago. We know from fossils discovered in North America that this species, officially named *Eohippus angustidens*, was a small, multi-toed, leaf-eating forest dweller (see painting →). It is also called dawn-horse, which is the literal meaning of *Eohippus* in Greek.



Artist rendition of *Eohippus*, from a Charles R. Knight painting at AMNH. See [full size](#).

Over the millions of years since *E. angustidens* lived, equids have evolved extensively. Three of the more major changes that took place are:

- Size – equids became much taller over time.
- Toes – multi-toed early equids evolved to having a single functional toe today – what we call the hoof.
- Teeth – as habitats changed from forest to open grasslands, equid teeth adapted to a diet of grasses, which are more abrasive than the leaves found in their earlier tree-filled homelands.



From left to right: *Mesohippus*, *Neohipparion*, *Eohippus*, *Equus scotti* and *Hypohippus*. [Illustration](#) by Heinrich Harder in 1914 to show what these extinct species might have looked like.

The illustration at left (←) is an artist's depiction of several extinct equid species, based on their fossil remains. *Eohippus angustidens* is the small animal in the center. These species did not co-exist, but the artist drew them together to show the horse family's changes in size and shape over time.

Over their long history, equids migrated to most places in the world. The result is a very rich and widespread fossil record compared to many other animal families. It provides a lot for paleontologists

and other scientists to study; their findings frequently impact our understanding of equid evolution and add to our knowledge about the modern equids we know and love.

With that historical background, let's look at some facts and figures about horses living today.

Today's Horse Species

There are two types of living horses: the domesticated horse and Przewalski's horse (a wild horse). They both belong to the genus *Equus* and the species *Equus ferus*. To distinguish the two, they are assigned to different subspecies of *E. ferus*, as described below.

1. Domesticated horse

Scientific name: *Equus ferus caballus*

E. f. caballus includes all breeds of the domesticated horse, from mini horses like our Star to big guys like Garth.

This subspecies also includes free-roaming horses found in herds around the world, such as the Mustangs in the western US and east coast barrier island dwellers like the Chincoteague pony and Cumberland Island horse. Such groups are often called "wild," but they are actually feral, having descended from horses who were domesticated but escaped or were left to fend for themselves.



*Garth, a domesticated horse.
Scientific name: E. f. caballus*

It's estimated there are 60 million domesticated horses in the world today.

2. Przewalski's horse

Scientific name: *Equus ferus przewalskii*

That's typically pronounced "sheh-VAHL-skee." This horse is also called the P-horse (for short), the Asian wild horse, and Takhi, meaning spirit in Mongolian.

P-horses are a dun color, with an erect mane, dark legs, and a dorsal stripe. They range from about 12 to 15 hands high.



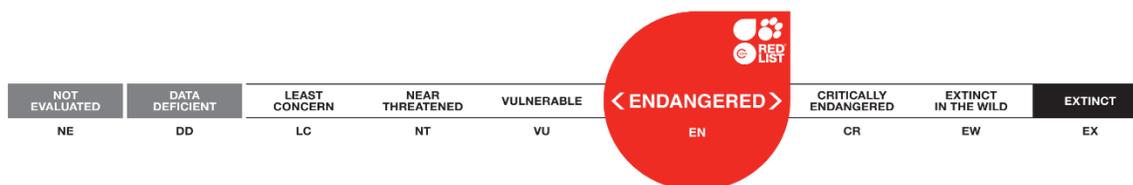
*Przewalski's horse (above and below)
Scientific name: E. f. przewalskii*

The name comes from Russian explorer and geographer Colonel Nikolaj Przewalski. He was not the original discoverer, but he became a namesake when he found a skull of one of the horses in the 1870s at what's now the China-Mongolia border. (And yes, there is an extra letter "i" at the end of przewalskii in the scientific name – it's a latinized form.)



These horses are best known for being the **only true wild horse** left in the world, having never been domesticated, and also for being a conservation success story. Native to a large area stretching from Asia into Europe, they became extinct in the wild around 1969.

Breeding programs at zoos and special reserves in several countries kept the P-horse in existence. Since the 1990s, it is again living in the wild through a reintroduction program, bringing P-horses to locations in Mongolia, including [Hustai National Park](#).



The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) lists the [P-horse's conservation status](#) as endangered; thankfully, its numbers are increasing. The National Zoo estimates there are 1,900 P-horses currently living around the world.

P-horses seem to exist under the radar, at least to some extent. Many people have never heard of them. Zoos and conservationists are working to get the word out.



To see a Przewalski's horse in person, you could travel to Mongolia and visit them in the wild. The next best thing is probably a zoo in the US. [Brookfield Zoo](#), just west of Chicago, appears to be the closest place to us in southwest Michigan. You could make it a day trip! And to see a domesticated horse, all you need to do is stop in at Cheff.

Sources / More Info

Evolution of the horse family:

International Museum of the Horse: [Legacy of the Horse](#)

Florida Museum of Natural History: [Fossil Horses](#)

PBS Nature two-part series [Equus – Story of the Horse](#)

Domesticated horse / horse family general info:

[The Horse: A Natural History](#) by Busby and Rutland, Princeton Univ Press, 2019.

Przewalski's horse:

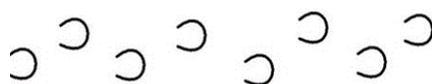
Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo [P-horse exhibit](#)

Smithsonian's National Zoo [P-horse exhibit](#)

[Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski Horse](#)

Przewalski's horse photos:

[P-horse at the Warsaw Zoo](#) / [P-horse in tall grass](#) (both from Wikimedia)



November Fun Fact

Staff Sergeant Reckless (c. 1948 – May 13, 1968), a decorated warhorse who held official rank in the United States military, was a small chestnut mare of Mongolian horse and racehorse breeding. She was purchased by Lieutenant Eric Pedersen in October 1952 for \$250 from a Korean stableboy who needed money to buy an artificial leg for his sister; she was trained to be a pack horse for the Recoilless Rifle Platoon in the Marine Division. She was named Reckless after the nickname for the Recoilless rifles she packed, and quickly became part of the unit. Reckless was allowed to roam freely through camp, sleeping in the Marines' tents on cold nights, and joining them in the mess hall to eat nearly anything, including scrambled eggs, pancakes, and coffee. Reckless would often join the soldiers in having a beer or Coca Cola.

Reckless served in numerous combat actions during the Korean War, carrying supplies and ammunition, and was also used to evacuate wounded. Learning each supply route after only a couple of trips, she often traveled to deliver supplies to the troops on her own, without benefit of a handler. The highlight of her nine-month military career came in late March 1953 during the Battle for Outpost Vegas when, in a single day, she made 51 solo trips to resupply multiple front-line units, during which she was wounded in combat twice. Reckless was given the battlefield ranks of corporal in 1953, and sergeant in 1954. Following the war, she was awarded two Purple Hearts, a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, inclusion in her unit's Presidential Unit Citations from two countries, and other military honors.

Reckless was featured in magazines, made appearances on television and at Marine Corps events, and had multiple statues and memorials dedicated to her service. Several books have been written about her.

Reckless lived at the Marine base at Camp Pendleton, where she gave birth to four foals, and was pampered until her death in May 1968.

For more information:

[Staff Sergeant Reckless | A Korean War hero](#)
[Sgt. Reckless, A Forgotten Hero](#)



Heroes of the Storm

After Hurricane Ian hit western Florida on September 28, rescuers battled the rising floodwaters on boat and horseback, plucked stranded residents in Venice, Florida, from their homes and herded cattle to higher ground.

Locals and rescuers, long familiar with how hurricanes push water into their neighborhoods, said Hurricane Ian drove unusually high flooding, which came three days after the storm's passage.

By Saturday afternoon, a flotilla of boats was buzzing around the neighborhood, from small fishing boats to kayaks and stand-up paddleboards.

So many people rallied to rescue their fellow residents and animals caught in the flood - heroes in the hurricane.



“Bad things do happen in the world, like war, natural disasters, disease. But out of those situations always arise stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.” ~ Daryn Kagan

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Aaron A

Corbin F

Carrie K

Florina M

Rachael T

Jackie D

Jacky F

Claire L

Claire P

Dale W

Marisa F

Lauren G

Ann L

Lauren R



Cheff gets a large discount on horse-related products!

If you would like to get more bang for your buck, you could make a [DONATION](#) to Cheff and we will gratefully use it where most needed!

Amazon Smile

Anytime you order online from [**Smile.Amazon.com**](#), the Cheff Center can receive benefits. Support us each time you shop at **no** extra cost through Amazon. To find out more, visit:

<https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about>

Harding's

Harding's customers - if you join their Community Rewards program and select the Cheff Center as your organization of choice, we receive a rebate based on your purchase amounts. Please let your friends and family know—every penny helps! For more information, click on the link below.

<https://www.hardings.com/savings-and-rewards/community-rewards/>

Rite Aid

Rite Aid is one of Cheff's partners and extended their shopper rewards program to us. Please consider signing up as a Cheff Supporter, it's just one quick form: [RXfundraising.com - Support Your Cause!](https://www.rxfundraising.com/support-your-cause/)

Do you have any Questions/Comments/Suggestions?

If so, you can contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, at sara@cheffcenter.org

Newsletter Contributions by: Emily Fields, Ann Lindsay, Ashton Maguire, Morgan Meulman, Sara Putney-Smith, Marianne Stier

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