

A Memorial to "Simon"
Hearts & Hooves
January 2010

Simon came to Hearts & Hooves in late August along with his dwarf sister, 'Fiesty'. The two dwarf miniature horses had never been separated before and were physically in rough shape when they were surrendered to H&H. Unfortunately Fiesty had some major problems due to the deformation of her legs, caused by the dwarfism. Shortly after arriving Fiesty and 'Tiny' (aka Simon) were taken to the Westwind Veterinary Hospital where the vets did their best to come up with solutions to Fiesty's leg deformities and the pain that she was going through. Ultimately Fiesty's quality of life was poor and she was in pain, the vets determined that the most humane option would be to put Fiesty to sleep.

Simon had lost his sister and best friend and Hearts & Hooves was there for him every step of the way. The vets looked him over that same day and determined his health and external deformities to be genetically linked to the dwarfism and other than the apparent, external complications he was in reasonable health. Simon had malformed hooves, slightly deformed/bowed back legs, as well as a few facial deformities and severe scoliosis in his spine which caused it to bow upwards and to one side in some places. Despite his outward appearance Simon was one of the sweetest little horses Hearts & Hooves has been privileged to rescue and his memory will be with us forever.

When he first came to the farm, Simon's given name was 'Tiny', but after a few weeks, much deliberation and some pretty ridiculous names, he was affectionately called Simon one day and the name stuck after that. Once Simon had settled into his new home, his sweet and adorable personality out-shined his outward appearance and he soon wriggled his way into all of our hearts. He was the one who would greet you with a goofy whinny as soon as you walked into the barn, or if he saw you from out in the field. In spending some alone time with him, he would eagerly crawl into your lap or have you scratch under his cheek or around his jaw. He gave you his whole heart and his trust, even if you just gave him a little affection every now and again.

In October due to the change in weather and Simon's swayed back he collected moisture there and developed "Rain Rot" to effectively treat him we had to shave the hair off his back so that his scabs would heal and so infection would not set in. Due to his hair cut Simon it was too cold outside, so he stayed inside the nice, warm barn for the remainder of his nights and when the weather was bad. During the nicer days Simon spent time outside with the other Hearts & Hooves horses, wearing a warm and special blanket that had been fitted just for him. During the time he spent in the barn, Simon shared a stall with Mable (the pig) and despite a few squabbles, oinks and squeals the two were friends and shared each other's company until the end of December. Towards the end of the year Simon's back was not healing and his spirits lessened, though he remained on his special diet of bran and mashed food and he began eating less and less. Simon's health was failing and we could not determine exactly what was wrong, we started him on pain medication but we knew this would not be an answer for long.

On December 29th, we said goodbye to our special little guy. After a life too short we put Simon to rest and his pain and suffering ended.

He crossed the Rainbow Bridge that day, where he has been reunited with his sister and long lost friend Fiesty, where they are healthy and happy in a place where their beds will always be soft at night, the weather is always kind, the grass is green and lush and the skies are always blue. In a wonderful place where Simon's legs and back are straight and pain-free, a place where he can live out the rest of his immortal days in happiness and comfort, watching over Hearts & Hooves, as well as the future "Tiny's" or "Simon's" that will be rescued and adopted in the future.

Simon left a big impression on everyone he met, showing us all his soft and loving demeanor in addition to his enduring love and trust in people. He was a living, breathing example of how no one can judge a book solely by its cover. His absence has left us with feelings of sorrow and grief, but with the pain of losing him, Simon left behind fond memories and his quiet love, a love that we will hold in our hearts forever, even now that he's gone.

A Miniature Horse Dwarfism FAQ (...Miniature Horse World)

Equine dwarfism is a relatively rare occurrence in large horses, but it is far more common in miniature horses that have been bred exclusively for small size. In the August/September 1998 issue of Miniature Horse World, dwarfism is described as the following:

1. **Achondroplasia**—(legs do not grow in length). Normal bone growth does not occur and often develops unevenly at the joints, causing crooked legs.
2. **Dwarf foals** are sometimes born with contracted tendons or tendon laxity. Joint enlargements and joint deviations are common, often becoming progressively serious with age. Extreme cow hocks, extremely short gaskins and sever sickle hocks all with varying degree of joint laxity and /or joint weakness are also common.
3. **Some types of dwarfs** have an over bite, or an under bite. If an undershot jaw is present, the molars may also be out of alignment, requiring that the teeth be floated more frequently than for a horse with a normal mouth. Highly placed nostrils always accompany the undershot jaw.
4. **Brachycephalic** dwarfs have a large buldging forehead with an extreme dished face, overly large eyes (sometimes placed at uneven angles) and nostrils placed too high up on the face. A second type of dwarf has a more normally shaped head and eye and longer neck, but its head and body are still oversized when compared to the length of its legs. This second type of dwarf does not usually have an undershot jaw.
5. **Head obviously longer than the neck.** In some dystrophic dwarfs, the neck appears to come directly out of the shoulders.
6. **Girth depth is greater than the leg length.** Disproportionately oversized entrails and genitals. That is why so many dwarfs have the big “pot bellies.”
7. **Vertebra** deviations are common.
8. **Often unable to rear or stand on hind legs.** Some types have an odd “tilting backward” gait with shoulder higher than the croup.
9. *Sometimes associated with the various dwarfism syndromes are less obvious characteristics such as mental retardation, heart and other internal organ defects, sterility, shortened life span, arthritis and inactivity or depression (both of which are probably due to pain).*

**In Memory of Simon
Michelle/December 29, 2009**