

# Draft Horse Queen Overcomes Handicaps From Childhood Injury

LINDA WILLIAMS  
Bedford Co. Correspondent

FISHERTOWN (Bedford Co.) — Beverly Oldham, Bedford County Draft Horse Queen, considers herself quite lucky to be alive.

At the age of 11, she was riding a bicycle near her home with a friend. "We were kids," she remembers, "And, we really weren't watching what we were doing."

Suddenly, on this peaceful summer day, Beverly was struck by a car and hurled from her bicycle onto the roadway.

She suffered head trauma, four broken ribs, a broken jaw, and was paralyzed on her left side for three weeks.

"They tell me I was in a coma for three weeks," this spunky young lady says now.

In order for her to breathe, it was necessary to do a tracheotomy in her neck.

Three major operations, and much therapy later, Beverly still has an airway that is 2/3 the normal size.

Because doctors were forced to tie up one of her vocal cords, Beverly will never be able to speak loudly.

It's a slight handicap that is hardly noticed. The softness of her voice goes with her gentle personality.

"At one time, I didn't think anything would ever turn out alright," admits Beverly. She had little chance for a social life between major operations. Her education was obtained through home schooling.

However, on Christmas day, she became engaged to Tom Sauter, a young man who considers himself very lucky to have found Beverly.

Both now share a mutual interest in draft horses.

"Prior to knowing Beverly, I didn't really know anything about draft horses," admits Tom.

It was in the summer of 1992 that the Bedford County Draft Horse Association, headed by Fred and Linda Sell, decided to elect a queen.

"Beverly was our unanimous choice," Fred says.



Beverly and her draft horse on the Oldham farm.

The Bedford County Draft Horse Association has between 15 and 20 members all owning anywhere from one to 15 draft horses.

Beverly lives on an 84-acre farm where her father has 15 head, which he raises and sells to Amish and Mennonite farmers.

"We also use them for our own farm work," says Russell Oldham. "We rake our hay with them and do some of the other field work."

Beverly does the stable work such as feeding, bedding, and brushing.

Beverly also owns a six-year-old Haflinger Stallion Paint Pony.

Her responsibilities as Bedford County's queen include helping to

obtain funding for the Draft Horse barn and show which has become an annual part of the Bedford County Fair.

"I spoke to the Rotary Club at a recent meeting," she smiles and admits this was not an easy task for a young lady who has difficulty talking.

Beverly also gives out ribbons at the Draft Horse show at the fair.

She participated in three parades and three dinners at the 1992 Fall Foliage event in Bedford.

"We're proud to have Beverly representing our association," Fred Sells says. "And, we are so happy that things are at last going in the right direction for this deserving young woman."



Beverly is frequently seen at the reins of the draft horse drawn street car owned by Fred and Linda Sell. Above, a group of Everett senior citizens were about to go for a ride.

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