

# Young horse lovers will learn from pony project

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER  
Post Staff

DALLAS - With the help of four furry friends, members of the Showin' Blue 4-H Horse Club are set to learn a lot over the next few years. With a project Jane Morris calls "unique," Showin' Blue members will care for and eventually train Welsh Pony yearlings at Morris's Lonewood Farm in Dallas. The ponies are wintering on Beth Finn Jayne's property, which is a part of Lonewood Farms.

The Welsh Pony is one of the nine native breeds of the United Kingdom. The four fillies are first generation from imported stock and are from three imported stallions in a breeding program that has taken 20 years to assemble and perfect.

Showin' Blue leased the ponies from Cynthia Kirby of Saltwood Farm in Middletown, Rhode Island. The ponies came to Dallas thanks to a friendship between Kirby and Morris.

"When Cynthia went to the 4-H state finals in October, that clinched it. She saw how wonderful the 4-H program was and how the kids worked together," said Morris, sitting comfortably at her kitchen table at Lonewood. The ponies arrived Nov. 12.

Morris owns two Saltwood ponies, one of which won the 1998 PA 4-H State Championship. The pony was handled by Showin' Blue 4-H member Megan Ross, who was also awarded the Master Showmanship Award.

The Welsh Ponies are divided into four sections, A, B, C, or D. These four ponies are Section B,

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Carole Malig  
Showin' Blue leader

which are known as Welsh Ride Ponies. They are taller than the rest and the most recent addition to the breed. This section is known for light elegance and is considered the "archetypal riding and hunter pony." An influx of Arab and Thoroughbred blood in the 19th century increased the size of some native ponies that formed the foundation of this section.

The four, with their fuzzy, dark brown coats are, Saltwood Lydie, Saltwood Leah, Saltwood Maud and Saltwood Cecily.

Morris, who says she wanted horses before she could even speak, has owned Lonewood Farm for 26 years. She currently has seven horses and ponies and three dogs. The former Lake-Lehman music teacher and guidance counselor believes this is a terrific opportunity for Showin' Blue.

"These kids are certainly deserving of this project. It rewards them for the hard work they do all year long outside of their horses," said Morris, referring to Showin' Blue's continued community service. The organization has helped the Back Mountain Library, soup kitchens, and St. Jude's Children's Hospital.



The Welsh ponies braced themselves against a cold wind last month at Lonewood Farm

POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

"Also, this project teaches them a great deal about responsibility," explained Morris. The small group who volunteered to work with the ponies will be in charge of feeding,

grooming, teaching obedience, hoof cleaning and much more. They will also show the ponies in model pony classes where they will be judged on conformation and manners. The ponies will not be taught to carry a rider until they are well into their third year.

Carole Malig, organizational leader for Showin' Blue, said it is always wonderful to let young children begin from the ground up with a horse or pony.

"Kids usually handle their own horses that have already been broken. These animals are not broken. The kids will spend a lot of hours and will get very involved. They will get a lot of learning out of this," said Malig, who has been involved with Showin' Blue for 25 years.

Malig said Morris, who is not a member of Showin' Blue, has been a tremendous help to the organi-

zation over the years.

To Morris, ponies are a perfect fit with children. "Ponies need to be with children because that's who'll they'll spend their lives with. The children teach them to be calm and gentle," she said. "This makes me happier than anything. It not only teaches kids responsibility, but also a sense of what life is about."

Horses are different from dogs or cats. They must be fed at a certain time every day and must be given a specific amount of food. "It gives children commitment to something. They cannot sleep in on a winter day just because it's cold," explained Morris.

She describes the love of horses as "incurable" and is happy to help young enthusiasts in their pursuits. So far, Lauren Collini, Megan Ross, Kim Collenda, Amanda Adamitz and Alem

Shumack are taking part in the project.

Amanda Adamitz of Shavertown, cannot wait until it gets warmer; then she can really work with the ponies. "Since they are so young, it will be fun to work with them," said Adamitz, 17, who is a senior at Bishop O'Reilly. "I like that we will be doing different types of showing, such as, model, grooming and showmanship."

Adamitz says she and her four fellow horse enthusiasts currently see the ponies once a week to help the animals get used to them.

"I just like to be around them. It definitely teaches responsibility and teaches you sportmanship," she said. Adamitz plans to attend Delaware Valley College next year to study equine science.

After the project ends, the four ponies will be returned to Saltwood Farms in Rhode Island.



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER

Jane Morris introduced Lindsey Jayne to the Welsh ponies that are wintering on Lindsey's family's farm. They are being cared for by members of the Showin' Blue 4-H Club.

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