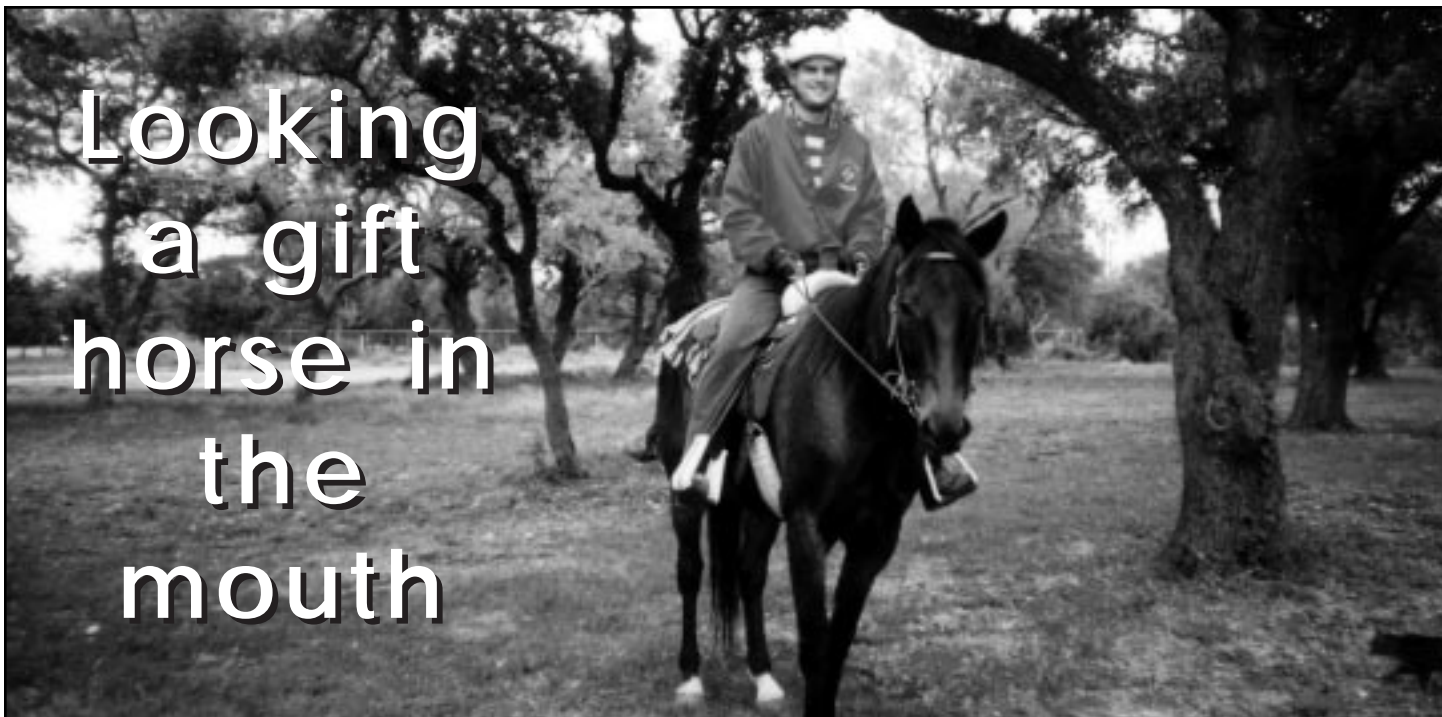


Looking a gift horse in the mouth



Randy Bullard, owner of adopted horse Riot, enjoys a relaxing walk. Bullard spends a lot of time caring for the horse.

By 1st Lt Matthew Mayberry
HQ AIA/PA
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Their hearts went out to unwanted, abused and abandoned former racehorses. They poured their time, money and energy into rehabilitating the one-time champions that others had left to die an inhumane death ... tied to a tree out in the countryside near San Antonio without food or water.

In return for their love, Randy Bullard and his family now have lifelong companions.

Bullard, a cowboy and humanitarian, is a command and control warfare systems analyst in the Air Force Information Warfare Center at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, and an Air Force Reserve major assigned to AIA's National Air Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

The Bullards started their crusade when they adopted two horses from Brighter Days Horse Refuge in Pipe Creek, Texas, where there're usually 50 such horses at any given time.

"Most of the time people say, 'Just send the horse to the glue factory.' We said 'let's save these horses,'" said Bullard.

One horse, a thoroughbred named Streaking Hempien, had been treated so badly the Bullards were unable to regain its trust and eventually arranged to have it roam free at the 300-acre Black Beauty horse refuge for mustangs and other horses near Waco, Texas. But the

second, a quarterhorse named "Create a Riot," has become a fine riding horse once again, said Bullard.

"You have to count the victories in rehabilitating these animals. While we wish we could have turned Hempien around, we couldn't be more pleased with Riot. People would never guess the horse was mistreated," said Bullard.

These horses' problems often originate when their usefulness as racers expire after about four years of age. From there, they are either used for breeding or as pets. Horses are expensive animals to keep, so they sometimes land in the custody of people who simply can't afford them or who don't want to spend a lot of money on an animal that isn't yielding them any profit. In the most extreme cases, the horses are left to starve.

For those horses lucky enough to be sent to Brighter Days, care is available. The really lucky ones find owners like the Bullards who are willing to invest the time and resources to retrain them.

"When we first started training horses, a lot of people just shook their heads and said we would never be able to turn these animals around. They would ask why we don't just buy a trained horse.

"There's a tremendous amount of self-satisfaction that comes from working with these abused horses and seeing them become good pets again. Riot is rideable, even tempered and really enjoyable," said Bullard.

The Bullards spent one-to-two hours, five nights a week working with Riot in the stable and walking around inside the round pen for the first few months, trying



Riot, with owners from left, Nancy, Randy and Chandler.

to regain the horse's trust, before it was ready to have someone on its back.

"It was a huge thing to get on his back. We had to show Riot a lot of love and patience before he was ready to ride," Bullard said.

Not every horse is a success story, however. "Hempien was so abused she developed a real hate and mistrust for man. She was never going to be a steady-riding horse again, so we arranged for her to be returned to the wild," said Bullard.

You can tell how a horse has been abused by their behavior and response to different situations, said Bullard.

"Hempien's mouth had been badly abused. Somewhere along the line, someone had used the wrong bit or something. By the time I got her, she wouldn't accept the bit and I really had to struggle to get her to take the veterinarian's oral medicines," said Bullard.

Another telltale sign of Hempien's mistreatment came from her hooves. It normally takes a few minutes to clean out a horse's hooves, but Hempien so disliked having her hooves touched that Bullard would struggle for hours to

accomplish the should-be small feat. Where the normal horse learns quickly to allow its owner to pick up its hooves and clean them, Hempien would buck and evade, Bullard said.

Bullard stressed that adopting abused horses is not for everyone. Not only is it expensive to retrain a horse, but new owners must have a lot of time and patience. But, Brighter Days is always excited to have volunteers come out to the ranch to help for a day.

"I think volunteering at the refuge is a wonderful thing for people who love animals. They should bring carrots and plan to pitch in doing many tasks, such as cleaning stables. It is a good chance to spend time with the horses," said Bullard.

Several airmen from the AFIWC Community Outreach Program recently built shelters for the horses at Brighter Days.

"San Antonio is a wonderful environment for doing something like this. If more people got involved, our efforts to help these animals would work even better," said Bullard. ■

Nation honors Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ted Wuerffel

HQ AIA/HC

Kelly Air Force Base, Texas

People across the nation will pause to observe the life and contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this month. Nov. 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill creating a national holiday to honor Dr. King.

Dr. King was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Ga. As a young boy, he was an exceptional student and entered Morehouse College at the age of 15. He graduated at the top of his class from Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania in 1951. He received a doctor's degree in theology from Boston University in 1955. While at Boston, he met Coretta Scott, a voice student at the New England Conservatory, who would become his wife and life-long partner.

As his graduate work neared completion, he faced the decision of teaching, accepting a large parish in the Detroit area, or returning to the south where segregation was still the accepted way of life. Although Dr. King had a deep desire to teach, and though Coretta King felt her artistic talents would find much wider expression in the north, the couple moved to Montgomery, Ala., in the fall of 1955 to accept the call to the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. The Kings felt an obligation to work in a social environment where blacks had very few privileges, separate seating areas in restaurants and theaters, and even had to use separate toilets.

Within months of his arrival in Montgomery, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to move to the back of a public bus. The Black community responded with a year-long boycott of the bus system. Dr. King, who had become the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, helped lead and sustain the boycott in the face of political pressure, threats, countless obscene and racist

phone calls, and eventually bombings of his home and the homes of Rev. Ralph Abernathy and Rev. Robert Graetz, one of the few white ministers in Montgomery who faithfully espoused the cause of the Black community in the bus boycott. Dr. King was arrested for violating an obscure anti-boycott law in Alabama. The case eventually reached the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the threats and bombings continued. In each case, the unity and determination of the Black community grew stronger when it might have been divided, and Dr. King's efforts to bring change through non-violent action began to gain national attention.

When the Supreme Court overturned his conviction, the long established tradition of separation of the races was overturned too, and Dr. King became a national leader.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated. When President Lyndon Johnson was informed of Dr. King's death, he issued a statement that said in part:

"America is shocked and saddened by the brutal slaying tonight of Dr. Martin Luther King. I ask every citizen to reject the blind violence that has struck Dr. King, who lived by nonviolence. I pray that his family can find comfort in the memory of all he tried to do for the land he loved so well."

More than 100,000 people attended Dr. King's funeral in Atlanta. On his tombstone are inscribed these words remembered by thousands of Americans from his rally proclamation before the Lincoln Memorial; they are words of an old Negro spiritual, and they reflect both Dr. King's commitment to equal rights for all people of every race and his deep faith in the eternal freedom awaiting the faithful people of God: "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty I'm free at last." ■