

Phyllis asked me to send this email Friday to everyone on the email lists, but with everything going on this weekend, I'm just getting to it now. Since she wrote it, the raffle and silent auction organized by Kathy and Annie at Salty Lane Farm has taken place and raised an incredible \$4,878! So in addition to what she says below, the Elliotts want to express their most heartfelt thanks for the incredible outpouring of generosity they've experienced. Pam Kasnet

"St. Patricks Day 2008. One I'll never forget! It was a beautiful day. Cold the night before, which is great for us horse people. See, on the cold nights as mud season begins, the ground freeze up again, so horses are turned out on what I call terra firma. It's the time of freezed dried coffee fields, another term!

However at this time of year, the fields mud up again by noon and since Im such a fanatic about holes and getting good green grass in the spring and just hate mud on the horses in general, I usually put them in. However on this day, it was colder than usual the night before. So, feeling for the horses' love to be outside, I went to get more hay, enter the field and let them stay out.

I went to the hay feeder. Tossed some in there. The alpha horses stopped to eat first. Rolled my cart along to toss out more here and there, giving enough space for a "horse bubble" and enough hay not to cause conflict. However the alpha horses thought I was holding out the good stuff in the cart and came to chase off the lower totem pole equines. I do remember that.

I remember getting run into by the "low poler." Getting mad at the group in general for being rude! Then, the next thing I was aware of was I was bleeding pretty good. I had a cell phone, called Bill to come out and get me and climbed up on a big boulder in the field and waited for help.

He ran out, put me in the car, and I put a towel on my face, asking if my eyes were still in my head. No lie! I did not feel pain or fear. I did know I was in trouble and had to go to the ER. You all that know me, know that I have a white coat phobia, but I was in no position to argue this one. Off to the hospital it was.

I remember needing to have a CAT scan. I remember that I had to take off my sweatshirt but told them just to cut it off. I remember arguing that they were going to give me an airway because I needed to go to Boston and told them Bill could drive me, don't need no helicopter ride, and leave my airway alone, thank you very much. I remember them giving me a sucker like at the dentist so I could suck the blood out of my mouth. Still fighting not to have them give me an airway. Darkness....

From there your story begins. I was out for three days. Bill was by my side 24/7.

There has always been a saying that I've heard from time to time that horse people are not very organized as a group - that we stay to ourselves, trainers, cliques, breeds or associations. I have found this is not at all true!

People I knew, 4-H groups, my beautiful barn girls and their parents, people I knew from being around horses and people who knew who I was, and people I have no idea from where - you were all here, all at once. Without being asked. An email newsletter on my daily progress. Another who could help with meals for my family so Bill could stay in Boston. Cleaning my horses' stalls, feeding them, hauling seven off property to make the job easier for volunteers. People from everywhere came forward to help. I am on prayer lists around the country.

It has been the most emotional experience of my life. When I well up with tears it is because of how humbled I have become and in awe of what has been done for family Elliott. I'm not sure I can write well enough to ever express my gratitude.

So, here I am, second day home. I can't see much, but I have sight. I am tired and weak, but I can go to the bathroom by myself! I can't eat much through a staw, but I can eat. I feel so blessed. Thank you.

Thank you to everyone for showing me that yes, there is a Santa Claus, that we have spirit of community and can rally for someone when they are down and out. Thank you for showing the youth in my life what it is like to have courage and compassion. I now know what it feels like to be loved by my community."