



Suzi Hoogkamer plays with her youngest horse, Juno.



There is a lot of history in the old barn that is home to four horses.



Suzi Hoogkamer is now the proud owner of her newborn foal, Juno, shown here at three days old.

Every Little Girl's Dream

Photos & Story by Lacy Gillott

“I just needed a fresh beginning,” explained Suzi Hoogkamer, 23. Her fresh beginning is what led to living a life-long dream she never expected to come true after moving from Oshawa to Picton in November 2010.

“It’s everything every little girl would ever want and I’ve got all of it and more. I got surprise after surprise.” Hoogkamer was working as a pharmacy clerk at Rexall in Picton where she met Marlene. She later became great friends with Marlene and her husband Russell.

“We started off with just the one horse and a whole bunch of cattle,” said Hoogkamer, explaining the Trottmans’ farm the first time she ever arrived.

“We became close and then he got sick which is how I ended up taking care of the horses,” she said.

When Hoogkamer went to visit Russell in the hospital, Russell elaborated on his struggle and Hoogkamer volunteered to take on caring for their horse, Sunrise.

“I didn’t know what I was doing,” laughed Hoogkamer. “I knew how to pet a horse, but I didn’t even know how to brush a horse at that point.” She was ready and willing to learn, strictly out of compassion.

When Russell returned home from the hospital, he decided the cattle were too much. They shipped all but two orphaned calves away.

During the winter of 2012, the relationship flourished between Hoogkamer, the Trottmans, their farm, and of course, Sunrise and the calves.

That December, Hoogkamer arrived on the farm to find a horse trailer in the driveway. Thinking she was going somewhere with Sunrise, Trotzman informed her they were getting a second horse.

“Blaze came and he had been raised more like a dog than a horse,” Hoogkamer giggled.

As time went on, Sunrise began gaining a lot of weight.

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Old horse memorabilia can be found on the farm.

Hoogkamer became concerned and called a vet.

“He told us she was not pregnant, just fat,” said Hoogkamer.

After a number of people came to check out Sunrise, it was finally confirmed around Mother’s Day that she was indeed pregnant. It wasn’t until May 2 when Hoogkamer received a phone call at 7 a.m. announcing the birth of Juno.

In the meantime, the two calves were becoming more playful and because they were so big, they were dangerous to be around. Trotzman and Hoogkamer decided it was time for them to go.

They took the calves to a cattle auction block where Hoogkamer was certain they would be used as stock cattle rather than beef cattle. While still sobbing after her calves were auctioned off, a beautiful tan pony walked out on the block and caught Trotzman and Hoogkamer’s eyes.

“I’m looking at her and thinking, what is wrong with it’s face? I mean she’s just beautiful,” said Hoogkamer. The announcer then said the pony had one of her eyes surgically removed.

Trotzman looked at Hoogkamer and said, ‘Should we get her?’. Hoogkamer then replied, ‘No, it’s too much work, we already have three horses.’ ‘But she’s so beautiful,’ Trotzman said.

Hoogkamer put her hand up and said ‘Alright’ and Trotzman jumped up, ran and bought the pony from the man who had the highest bid.

“Now we have four,” laughed Hoogkamer. “I am definitely raising them just for pure love and satisfaction of just having horses because I mean they’re beautiful creatures. They’re smart, they’re loving, they’re just awesome.”



Sunrise is the 16-year-old mother of Juno.



There’s a long list of physically demanding chores on the farm.



Hoogkamer laughs and says Sunrise always has the dirtiest stall.