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Painting pony has a brush with fame

Artistic equine will produce art for an auction that will help Chincoteague ponies in the wild

By LAUREN MCCORMACK Special to the Local News

NEWLIN — Kyley DiLuigi didn't know what to do with wild-born Chincoteague pony Minnow when she began training him six years ago.

She tried to ride him, but he was too rough with her.

She tried to get him used to people, but his abusive past made him terrified of almost everything.

DiLuigi was ready to give up on the horse after two years of training him, and then she found a book about teaching horses tricks using the clicker method.

And as soon as Minnow learned that first trick — giving DiLuigi a kiss — everything else fell into place.

"He learned it so fast and after that wanted to learn more and more," she said.

Minnow's accelerated learning curve soon left Di-Luigi with no more tricks to teach him — until she spotted some painting supplies she was using at the time as an art major at the University of Delaware.

And so, on Jan. 5, 2007, Minnow picked up his first paint brush and began a career as a storied artist.

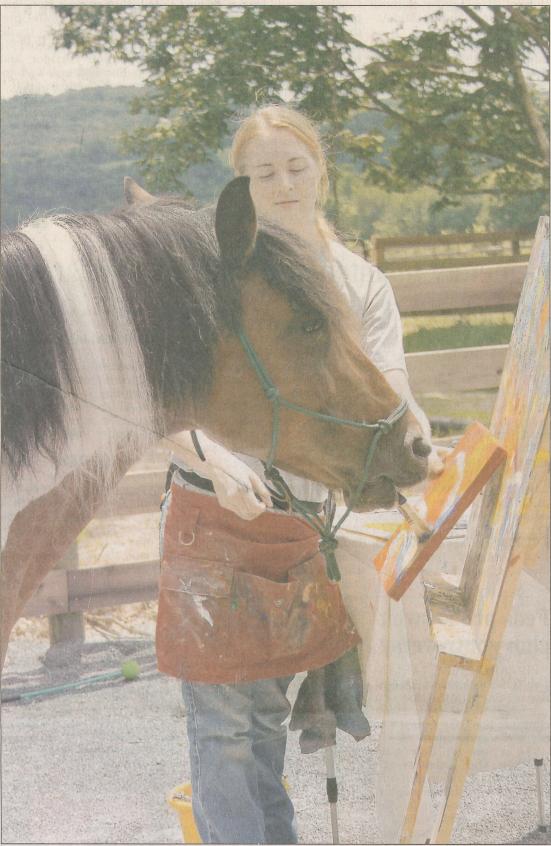
"It was rewarding because it was an accumulation of everything I had been working on with him," DiLuigi said. "He can create this wonderful thing as a release of his past almost. It's a therapy almost like, I was in this sad situation but now I'm happy and can create something out of this almost."

Minnow was born in 1993 into a band of wild horses on Assateague Island and was rounded up and auctioned off as a colt.

"I'm not sure where he

Staff photos by Kali Wallace Above, Kyley DiLuigi holds a canvas while pony Minnow paints at Iron Horse Farm learning to paint in January 2007. At right, Katie Parker, 8, and Tea Clark, 11, hold up their shirts to dry.





Ridgre rook their cunnert for troone

♦ See PAINT, Page A4



Staff photos by Kali Wallace

INY DRAIN (2796)

Kyley DiLuigi preforms a trick by standing on top of her pony, Minnow, at Iron Horse Farm in Newlin. The impres-sionistic pony has a date to twice a night from July 27 to 31, painting and performing other tricks while his creadebut his talents at Virginia's Chincoteague Pony Centre tions are auctioned off.

Chincoteague Pony Centre," DiLuigi said. "He lived there and then went to a not-sonice home until the owner went exactly, but he ended up for a little while at the right before me rescued him from that situation."

offers him.

to complete a painting, "He'd stand at his easel for hours if I let him," DiLuigi three times a month, and petween five and 20 minutes though Minnow takes said

Minnow has completed upher sport until the previous owner gave the horse to her DiLuigi used Minnow for

He will be traveling back to his birthplace for the an-Chincoteague, Va., at the end of the month for pernual Pony Penning Swim in

to 31, painting and performing other tricks while his creformances.

Minnow favors bright colors, which he picks himself out of a selection DiLuigi He normally paints two to

wards of 200 paintings since brush, and he paints things that are "very abstract, but you can see something in them sometimes. I see flocks of birds or wild horses. Its really up to the imagina-tion," DiLuigi said. he first picked up the paint-

as a wedding gift.

Guaranteed On-Time Service Or We'll Clear Your Line For FREE He will debut his talents at the Chincoteague Pony Centre twice a night from July 27

now can continue to paint a Pony camp member. Below, DiLuigi gives Minnow Above, Kyley DiLuigi hands her pony a paintbrush so Minshirt for a Fox Meadow Farm after he performs a kiss trick. share this special bond that "What makes him really I've never had with any special to me is him and ations are auctioned off.

pony" in DiLuigi's wedding.
"He threw petals out of a basket and walked down an aisle," DiLuigi said. "I'm pret-"Basically he'll do anything for me and he'll follow me around forever." ty sure my guests have never Minnow's paintings are on Minnow was the "flower seen anything like that."

sale at DiLuigi's Downing-town frame shop, Studio 3, and through the DiLuigi's Web site, ponvoaintponypaintings.com. Some of the proceeds from the paintings that will be auctioned off in helping wild Chincoteague Chincoteague will go toward

horse that didn't have a sogreat past, but he's gone on to become something great and amazing and my best friend," DiLuigi said. "He's an example of horses.



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