

Baby Eden Goes To Town

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Lake Nowhere Mule And Donkey Farm



Someone told me recently that “If you own livestock, you will have dead stock.” I have decided that I would rather think of it as “God works in mysterious ways.” Allow me to explain.

Our lovely, very large American Mammoth Jackstock jennet ADMS Lake Nowhere Dixie was the first jackstock jennet my husband and I bought. She was 12 months old and skin and bones - one of those animals you want to hide behind the barn so that no one calls the ASPCA on you.

After numerous phone calls to ADMS and others regarding her poor condition, we got her on a diet that made her bloom. Along with gaining weight, she got taller, and taller and, well - taller! She eventually got over 16 hands, and was the quietest, sweetest girl in the world. She did however have problems with her feet and legs. Nothing genetic, she would just seem to pull her check ligaments and have abscesses that her jackstock pasture mates would not ever have.

Digital X-rays sent to Dr. Tex Taylor, of Bryan, Texas, resulted in many phone conversations and a special “farrier to the stars” that trimmed only her, at great expense. When she reached maturity, we had many, many conversations with our veterinarian over whether to breed her or not. Our vet-

erinarian assured us that “Dix” would be just fine and had not had leg/hoof issues in almost a year and to go ahead and breed her. We bred her to our jack PCF’s Genesis (own son of Preacher, grandson of BullyBoy and great grandson of JenJack). After confirming that she was bred, we were ecstatic! This was going to be one greatly anticipated baby.

Dixie’s pregnancy was uneventful until four weeks before her due date when she pulled her check ligaments in both front legs. She spent the last month of her gestation just lying around. I do believe that she became a bit of a diva since she was being waited on hand and hoof by what she seemed to think was her personal wait staff. I was checking on her every four hours and if she had gotten up and moved from where we had left hay and fresh bedding for her, I would pick it all up and move it to where she was. Our veterinarian visited the farm every other day checking on the fetus and Dixie.

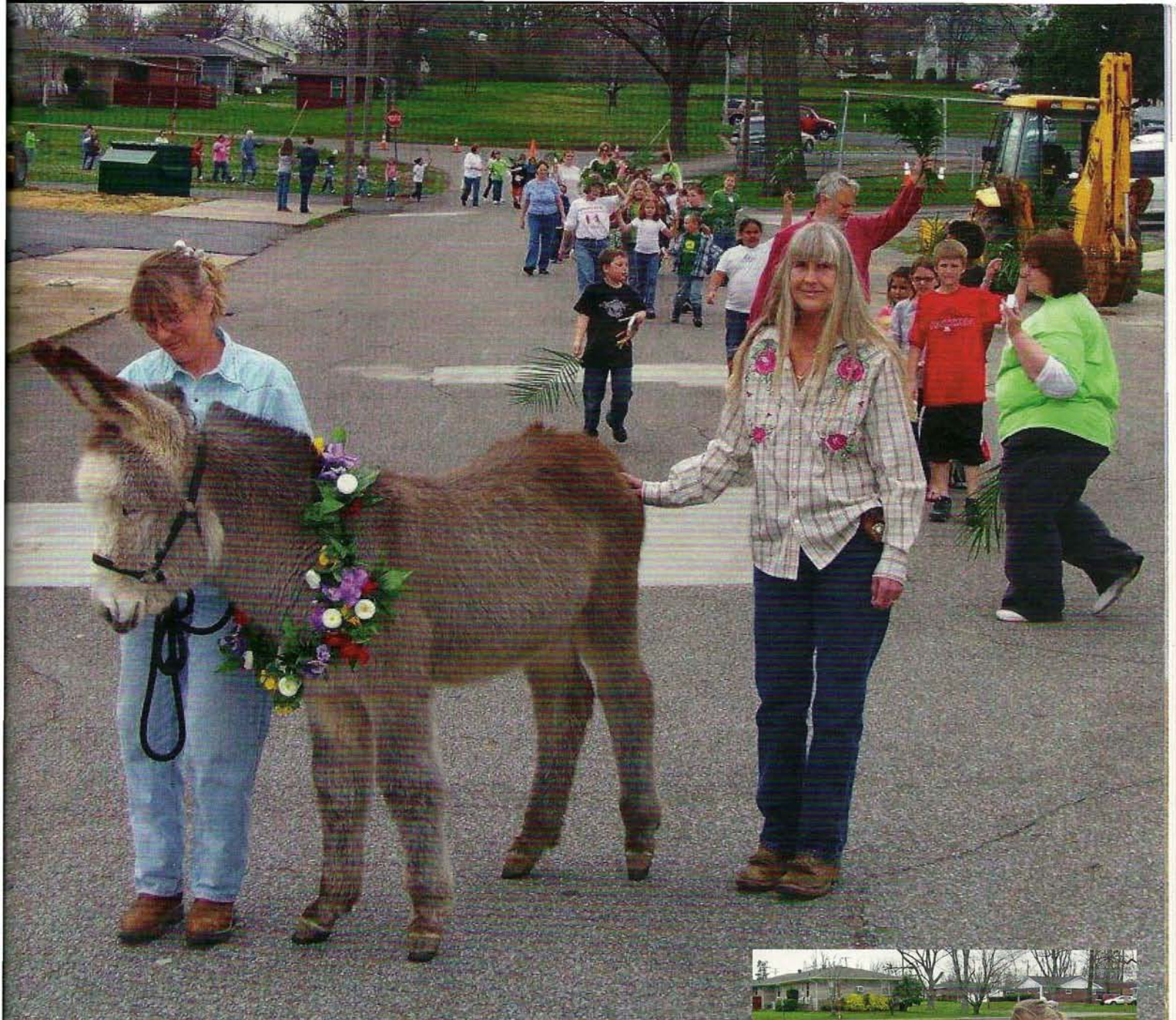
Then came 4:45 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day of 2009. I went to the barn and as I walked around the corner I heard an interesting noise. I raised my lantern and lo and behold there was a little baby being born. Dixie had a perfect delivery of a perfect little baby girl. Since the baby’s sire was Genesis, the appropriate name seemed to be “Eden” for the baby. Needless to say, Thanksgiving dinner was late, but boy did we have a lot to be thankful for! I checked on mama and baby for the last time at 11:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving and said an extra prayer of thanks, not only for having a healthy baby, but for not having to get up every four hours!

The next day at dawn I was up at the barn. Dixie had prolapsed her cervix, bladder and uterus. Equine surgeon Tony Hicks of Paducah, Ky., was kind

enough to make an emergency call and operated on Dix and ordered stall rest for two weeks. He told me that Susan, our farm manager, and I would have to take the baby out to exercise daily. Dixie did well, but did not move around much. Eden on the other hand moved around all the time. She would not bray to her mama, but would bray when Susan and I showed up at the barn. Within two weeks we put special corrective shoes on Dixie that seemed to make her more comfortable and mobile. She was still unable to keep up with the baby, but neither she nor Eden seemed to mind and Eden had a bunch of jennet aunties to keep an eye on her. Halter breaking Eden was a breeze since she wanted to be with her “people.”

Within two months, Dixie’s health declined. She was laying down more and did not want to walk. A conference was held with two veterinarians and the decision was that Dixie’s quality of life was not going to improve and the kindest thing was to euthanize her. She is buried at the foot of the hill behind our house and I miss her daily. Eden did not seem to miss her mama. After all, she had humans, a half sister and aunties to play with.

We got a phone call from the associate pastor of the First United Methodist Church of Clinton, Ky. She wanted to know if we had “a donkey” that we could bring to their church to participate in a parade that the children in their after school program were going to have before Palm Sunday. There would be palm fronds, tambourines and singing during the parade around the town square with 75 five- to ten-year-old children. Did we have a donkey that would be comfortable with those conditions? I told her that we had a few and I would e-mail her pictures of our jennets and she could pick who she would



like for us to bring. Well, of course she picked Eden.

March 24, 2010, marked three-month-old Eden's first trailer ride for a trip that would take her out-of-state. It took an hour and we used a draft trailer. She had two hay bags to entertain herself and she was as quiet as a mouse. We unloaded her at the church and waited for the children to arrive. Eden walked around the town and visited the Hickman County Extension Office, walked up steps on the sidewalk, visited with a man in a wheelchair and had a grand time. The children arrived and I do not believe that the associate pastor had any idea how many were going to use

the word "jackass!" Eden led the parade around the square and stopped traffic. She behaved perfectly with the exception of trying to eat the floral wreath we had placed around her neck.

I somehow think that it was fitting that this baby out of our beloved Dixie, that was foaled on a day of thanks was used to represent this time of rebirth and spring, and I know that Dixie would approve and be as proud of her lovely baby as we were. This is why I have decided that God works in mysterious ways and He knew that even in our grief over our loss that we would be thankful for this opportunity to love and appreciate baby Eden.

