

## Editor's Notes



*JOURNAL STAFF WRITER PAUL Cañada* first met Shirley Iverson during his trip to the Pacific Northwest back in March. She, along with other members of the Oregon Paint Horse Club, had volunteered for Paul's photo shoot at Nahalen Bay.

Paul had heard of Shirley Iverson, and made the connection between the name he recognized from many newspaper and television reports and the vibrant, redheaded woman on the Paint Horse.

Paul returned to Texas with his recount of having met Shirley. He wanted to write her story, and she wanted him to, as well. I was skeptical. Would Paul be able to identify with a sexual assault victim in such a way that he could write a unique and moving story about her?

Paul assured me that he could.

He spent countless hours on the phone with Shirley, and then returned to Oregon a second time to photograph her at home with her horses and her husband.

As the story grew, I was amazed by Shirley's candor. She is a bold, brave, woman who has taken her personal tragedy and turned it into not only a testament to the strength of the human spirit, but has also used it as vehicle to help countless others. That her Paints factored so prominently in her healing process became the central focus of the story because she took their role in her life so seriously.

While crimes such as the one committed against Shirley are—unfortunately—common in mainstream media, the *Paint Horse Journal* has never published a story on a topic as sensitive as this. As a result, many questions were raised as to whether or not the story was appropriate for the *Journal*. It was a question we debated from many angles.

To get a feel for how readers might react to this story, we sent it out to get feedback. It was read by a father, a wife, a husband, a daughter and even a granddaughter. The response was unanimous: Shirley's story was brilliant, touching and inspiring. And so, you'll find it in this issue.

Horses are amazing, wonderful, creatures that have a unique way of helping their humans. Perhaps no one knows that better than Shirley Iverson. I hope you appreciate and enjoy Shirley's story and are somehow touched by it. We may never have another story like it.

Jennifer Nice, Editor