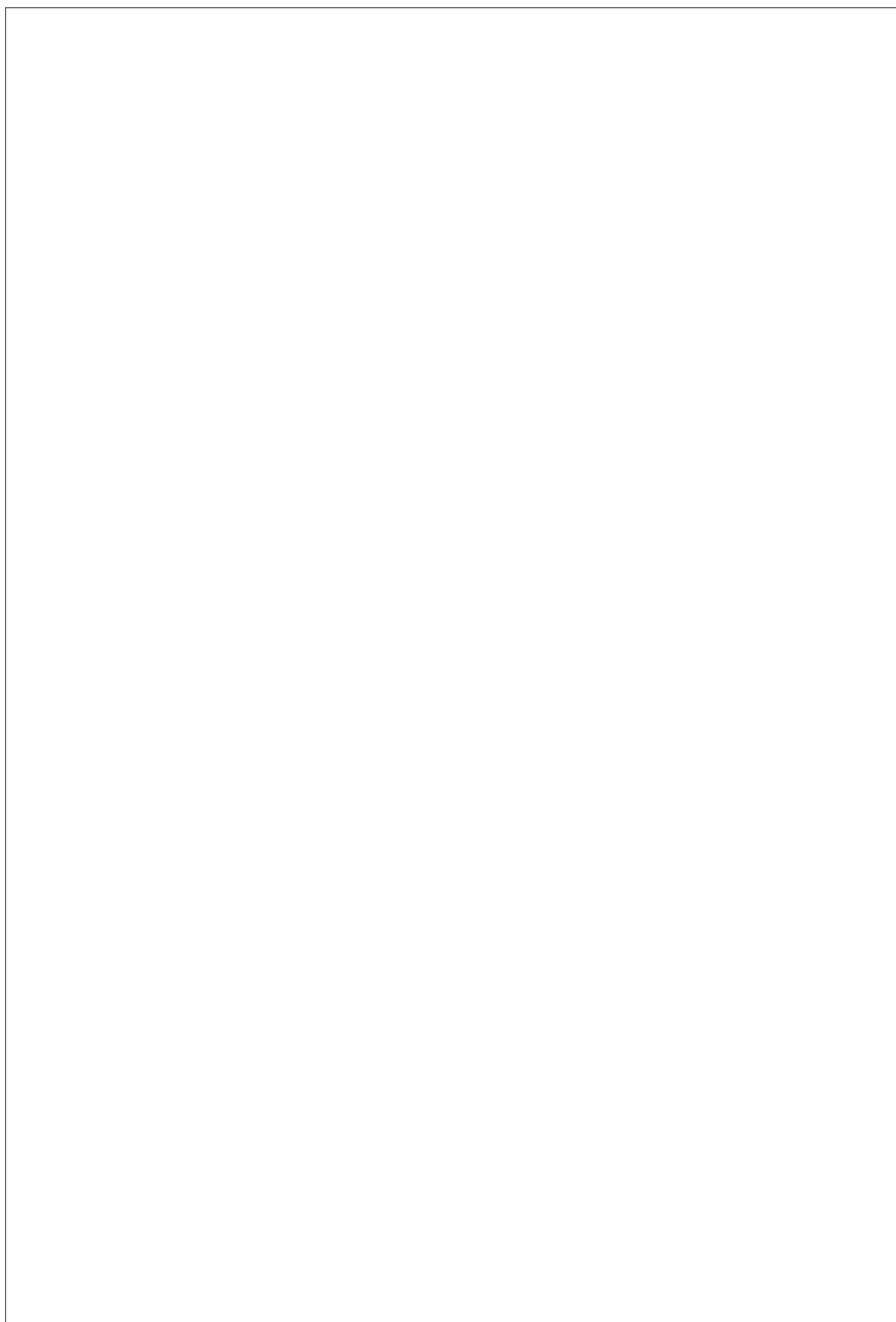


Photographs by Megan Avina The Taos News



Ruth Bourgeois of Equine Spirit Sanctuary looks toward one of her favorites, Buck.

VOLUNTEERS TAKE THE REINS

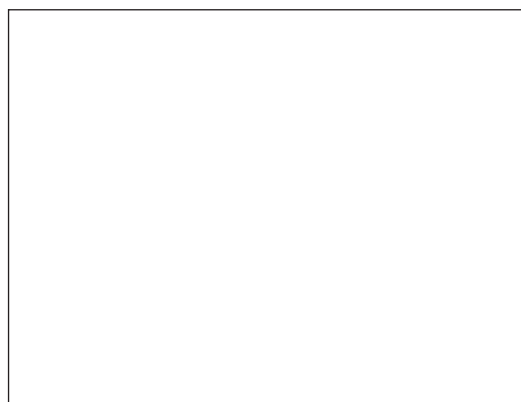
People interested in volunteering with the Equine Spirit Sanctuary attended an orientation session Saturday (May 3), where they were introduced to the equines currently being used for various activities.

Volunteers also did hands-on practice in haltering, leading, and grooming the horses and little Bindy, the miniature donkey.

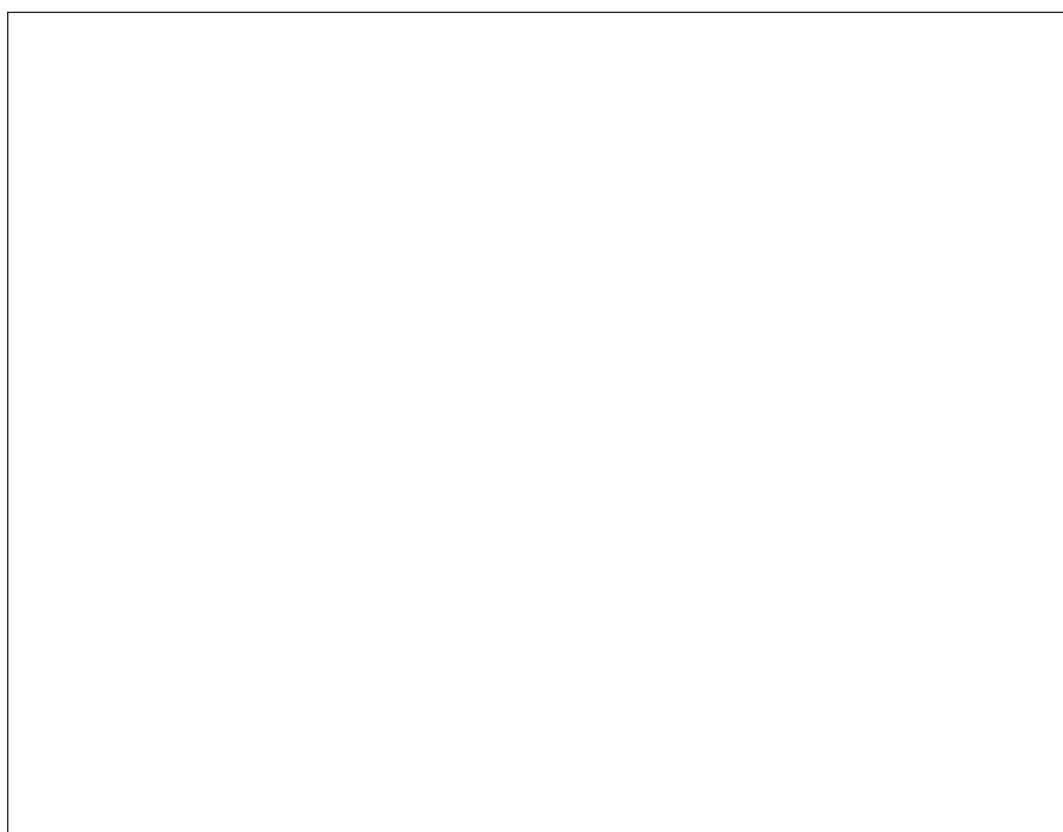
This was the third volunteer orientation session held at the sanctuary. Eight children, two teens and eight adults came to meet the horses and see what the sanctuary is all about.

Part of the volunteer "work" was to spend time getting to know the horses and Bindy. Also the equines can get used to having different people handle them. The horses, who are well trained and people-friendly, are adjusting easily to their new roles at the sanctuary.

On Friday (May 2), Lee Mills, principal of Eagle Nest Elementary and Middle School,



A group of youngsters — all hoping to volunteer at Equine Spirit Sanctuary — gather round one of its more famous residents, Bindy, the miniature donkey.



An Equine Spirit Sanctuary resident, Kat, loves the attention from the volunteers.

brought seven students. Ruth Bourgeois, director of the Equine Spirit Sanctuary, has been working with the school for the past year, giving lessons and helping to organize a program there.

The youths took turns brushing the horses, leading them, and getting them used to being handled by children. They also cleaned water tanks and rebedded one of the stalls. They each had a riding lesson taught by Bourgeois and volunteer DeAnn Hall.

An open house will be held Saturday (May 17), 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the sanctuary on Cuchilla Road. A tack swap and other equine-related displays will be part of this event. Following the May 17 event, the facility will be open to the public 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, with ongoing activities held weekends.

For more information, see www.equinespiritsanctuary.org or call (575) 758-1212.

— Staff report