

# Clay For The Potters Hand

*By Christopher Paasch*

I believe everyone and everything is given to us as a Gift from God. I think he enjoys looking at and listening to the sights and sounds he lets our minds design. He is a Sovereign God and we must come to learn he knows every hair on our head and every word we have and will ever utter. He knows every decision we will ever make and what the outcome will be.

It was a pristine morning in a small town on the coast in central Oregon called Winchester Bay. There was a snap of cold in the air as my wife Bonnie and I opened the door and exited our hotel room. We had an appointment with a realtor soon and needed to fully wake up. It was difficult to concentrate on finding some coffee as the wild cliffs in the background and the crashing waves against the docks filled our eyes. It was beautiful here. Crystal clear sunlight, the sound and smell of the ocean was so peaceful. The smallest wisps of fog were on our breath as we spoke. It was all we hoped it would be.

We were Thoroughbred horse trainers. Through hard work and a lot of blessings from God we were training at some of the premier tracks in the country. We had taken some time away to relax and begin to look for this new place. This place we were seeking was to be the beginnings of a new chapter in our lives. A new place to call home but it couldn't be just any place. It had to be special. You see, we had a dream. We were looking for that special place to share our dream. Both Bonnie and I felt led to reach our hand out to children and adults who needed to find normalcy and stability. Who were looking for their dream. We wanted to help them to find that dream.

We had called and made an appointment with a local realtor for that crisp day. We met in his office and were anxious to get going. He started out showing us 2 or 3 places that didn't quite fill the needs for this special place. We decided to return to his office so he could get a better idea what we were looking for. As we were giving him our wish list Bonnie was looking through a magazine. I heard the word "WOW" as she continued to read. Her excitement grew as she read. She suddenly lowered the paper. I remember her waiting for me to stop talking to the realtor. Her eyes seemed fixed on my lips waiting for them to stop. I looked at her and she couldn't wait to show me her find. It was a picture of a field in a nearby town. There was a parcel of vacant land for sale. It looked interesting, but it had one large problem, the asking price. I told Bonnie there was no way we could afford this place. It wasn't even close. She asked if we could just go see it.

"We can just look" she quipped. We had nothing else to do that day and Ron our realtor was up for it so I agreed. This is where we noticed the potters hand had begun to work. None of this would be my decision anyway.... I just didn't know it at the time.

It was a 60 mile drive, almost to the California border in a sleepy little town called Gold Beach. As we headed out our realtor admitted he had to go that direction to drop something off anyway and wanted to see this place for himself. As we drove into town we learned one of the greatest rivers in the world emptied into the ocean at Gold Beach. The Mighty Rogue River traverses the town. Just as we are about to cross the river Ron turned left and continued down a narrow windy road cut on the shore of the river. We drove for about a mile and his car came to a slow roll. He said timidly, "I think we are here". We pulled into an overgrown dirt driveway and stopped short of the cattle guard that protected the rusty pipe gate that was held on by a chain on both sides.

As we exited his car and walked onto the property our mouths dropped. We were looking at perfect rolling hills with huge flat pastures. The pastures were fed by several natural underground springs. The Rogue River actually ran through part of the property. The fields were filled with green clover and a rainbow of wild flowers. A horse's paradise. There were deep creek beds, tree covered parks, gentle hills. It seemed a special place. As we continued to scout around we looked up a hillside and there was a heard of about 30 elk. We later learned they lived on the property. This place is everything we could have ever hoped for to accomplish "the dream". We had found it but we had forgotten one thing, one important thing. We couldn't pay for it. It was not even close. Almost struggling we returned to the car to leave, to say good bye to this place but once again we didn't see the hands of the potter at work.

It was almost silent in the car as we drove back to the real estate office. My mind was racing. How could I figure this out? As we pondered a bank loan or some other creative way to finance it we just couldn't find a way to make this happen. We not only needed the money to purchase this paradise but would need substantially more for fencing, barns, a home, roads. It just seemed impossible.

As we thanked Ron and went on our way back to southern California we became almost depressed. It seemed our dream was impossible. We were very busy with our work training Thoroughbred horses and the busy Del-Mar season was on us. Hopefully that would take our minds off the property.

Our Lord says in Mathew 21-21 if we have faith and are in prayer we can even move a mountain and it seemed we need that kind of faith here and this is where we were sure the Potter's hands were at work. The list of things that happened in the next few months was nothing short of amazing. I think God does it that way so there is NO DOUBT it was him.

We had a substantial down payment but needed to find a lot more. I was led to put in an offer about 35% less than the asking price. Everyone almost laughed aloud and the listing agent was hesitant to show her client the offer. Within one day it was accepted as stated with no contingencies. Then at the track a slumping barn suddenly sprang to life. We had several other young horses that began to win races in an almost record rate. Then a horse we had raised from birth showed much promise and won his first race in a remarkable fashion. He was then purchased from us by one of our clients. Then came the finishing touches from our Potters hand. He molded and smoothed the clay of this strangely tall, well-built grey 2 year old filly to win the biggest race in the world for fillies in record time. Bonnie and I had always thought God had given her to our client and friend Charlie Cono as a gift for all he had done in his life for kids. See Charlie inspired me by watching him offer his hand and love to children. He once told me, "I don't know how someone with the where with all to help a child doesn't. I just don't know how they live with themselves". Charlie soon after went to be with our Lord, but the Potters hands had done their work.

In just a few months we had gone from a dream to reality. He had provided the right price and the dollars to fund it. Shortly after winning the Breeders Cup Bonnie and I were sitting on the floor in our apartment looking back at what had just happened. I remember her saying, "God has given us the way to begin this new chapter in our lives". She said she wanted the name of this place to be Dreams Hope and Faith Foundation. We had a dream and because of our Lord we found hope. Through his grace we had faith he would provide and by golly he sure has. Our dream is alive here and to look out at this place and see the rolling wheatgrass in the wind, to see that river quiet on this July morning, to see my Lords hand on all those smiling faces that enter this place, this very special place. My My My the Potter surely did a fine job.....

