

Marguerite Herald

I love horses. It is a privilege to board horses for people. I'm also privileged to be able to ride a couple of them.

One perfect spring morning in 2013, a friend hauled her horse to my place for a trail ride. One of my boarders got her horse ready. I was riding another boarder's horse, Punk, one I ride often.

Punk is a lively horse with expressive gaits. I usually work him in the arena. So every one was ready to go, gloves on and helmets snug. We were going on a pleasant jaunt through the woods with miles of trails--- or so I wished it.

Right away, Punk was prancing, as opposed to the sedate walk of every one else. However, he was responsive, and he walked nicely, in the lead, as we headed down the lane. As soon as we turned the corner into the first open field, he was prancing again.

Then he started to hop. I thought "he's bucking". Well, no, he wasn't bucking. He was leaping! Three leaps, each increasingly propulsive, and I was airborne!

From my point of view, performing a perfect slow motion somersault, the experience lasted more than a moment. I recall rather placidly observing the ground, then the trees, then the blue sky, then feeling my back connecting with that lovely solid ground.

BOOM

It was obvious that I had no breath, and I automatically rolled over to doggy position, and then, with the mightiest effort I've ever made, sucked the air in with a real genuine groan.

O sweet relief!

Still in doggy position, I looked at my friends, sitting on their completely relaxed horses, mouths agape. One extremity at a time, I got myself standing up. I determined that I was intact and walked toward my friends.

I realized that this was a fall from which few could ever get up and walk away. I knew that Francis, my Guardian Angel, quickly went into action and cushioned my body as I hit the ground.

However, I did not appreciate the full extent of the Angel's effort until 3 months later, when it simply dawned on me.

Consider, when someone falls, especially from a height, what is the one heavy part that's going to keep on falling?

That's right: The head.

My head never made contact with the ground. Even with a helmet, such a powerful impact would cause damage. My helmet was perfectly clean and unscratched. I had no indication of hitting my head.

Francis, my Guardian Angel, not only cushioned my back and gathered my limbs, but he also cradled my head so it never touched the ground.

Remember and thank your Guardian Angels.