



**Walking around town lately, I've noticed several small plastic horses tied to metal rings on the sidewalk. What's this all about, and who is responsible for it? —Angie Beltzer, *The Pearl***

We, too, have had our curiosity piqued by those miniature mares tethered around town. As it turns out, the metal rings embedded in the sidewalk are remnants of Portland's past, when horses were the main mode of transportation, and served as a spot for citizens to secure their steed while doing business around the city.

Last fall, local artist Scott Wayne Indiana decided to draw attention to this often unnoticed detail of our urban environment by stationing various toy stallions around the Pearl. "Wandering around the city has always been a favorite hobby of mine," he explains. "It helps me think, and I enjoy cities in general. The past few years, as I have wandered, I have been thinking of public art projects that I could do. Once the horse rings entered into that context of my meanderings, the idea to tether some toy horses occurred to me, so I gave it a try."

A little more than a year later, little plastic ponies have popped up all over the city, and the horse project has taken on a life of its own, thanks to a team of volunteers led by Kim Upham and Laura Kemp, who have created a website ([horseproject.home.comcast.net](http://horseproject.home.comcast.net)) to showcase the project and provide instructions for Portlanders to follow suit and deploy synthetic steeds in their own neighborhoods. Locals have also taken to caring for the horses, providing miniature bales of hay, water dishes and saddles to add to the spectacle.

Indiana hopes that the horse project will lead people to stop and take note of the little things and not always rely on others to bring them to the forefront. "I worry that people continue to want to be led by a leash to various aspects of [their] urban environment, instead of discovering things for themselves," he admits.

So continue to keep your eyes open for all of those seemingly insignificant details around town, Angie, and we will too—they're part of what makes Portland so unique. —Jeremy Lloyd

Do you have a nagging question about the city that's gone unanswered for too long? A local mystery you'd like us to investigate? Send an email to [pdx@pdxmagazine.com](mailto:pdx@pdxmagazine.com) and we'll get on it!