



WINTER-SPRING 2024 Newsletter

Dear Fellow SYVEA Members & Supporters,

Greetings to all; I hope you enjoyed the holiday season and that you are getting a positive start to 2024.

I would like to recap a few of the events of 2023 & give you all an update on the latest news from our Equestrian Center facility. We were precluded from hosting SYVEA –sponsored event for the first several months of 2023, partly due to weather and flood-related well issues [since repaired & resolved] and partly due to lack of liability insurance. We previously had a liability policy in place, which—as per common practice-- was attached to our long standing property insurance policy. Unfortunately, as has happened to many property owners in California, the Equestrian Center property was redlined due to wildfire risk. No standard property insurer would touch us. So, we were forced to bifurcate our insurance needs. We applied for Structure insurance through California Fair Plan; the initial quotes were prohibitively expensive and we were ultimately turned down for most of our structural coverage due to the age of the buildings & specifically the roofs. After several attempts on the liability front, we were finally able to successfully obtain an equestrian liability policy through Sypolt Insurance. We remain hopeful that the insurance situation in California will eventually improve and that in time we will be able to put a traditional policy back in place, but at least we are covered for liability. Incidentally it is much more expensive to purchase liability insurance as a stand-alone policy relative to having it folded into a traditional structure policy. Please also note that all outside entities who utilize our center also furnish the SYVEA a certificate naming SYVEA as an additional insured under *their* policy.

Therefore for the first half of 2023, the only events which took place at the equestrian center were the events hosted by outside entities. The **Valley Penning Association** hosted a number of highly successful and fun-filled Sorting/Penning events throughout 2023, as did **Carole Bennett** who organized several of her well attended **On The Bit** Dressage Schooling shows. Carole's shows feature a full dressage court as well as a fence course set up in a separate arena. Her

events have attracted an increasing number of junior participants over the last several years and she always receives rave reviews in addition to some nice write-ups in state-wide equestrian press. It's terrific for competitors of all levels to be able to attend a well-run, affordable event at such a nice venue. It is so important for us, as a horse community, to support events of all disciplines which encourage entry-level and youth competitors. Unfortunately Carole will be moving to South Carolina later in 2024, hence the next two shows will be her last. She has generously gifted the SYVEA with all her show equipment, data resources and materials, including the dressage court—thank you Carole! We would love to see someone else take on organizing Dressage and over fence schooling shows, either on a facility-rental basis or as a revenue-generating SYVEA activity. Please contact Carole at 805-452-7400 or Nancy at 805-895-1924 if you are interested.

With a liability policy in place, and thanks to a fantastic working committee, we were able to plan and execute the **SYVEA FUNdraiser Sort and Rope-Ranch Cutting** in early November. It was a terrific weekend featuring a ranch cutting on Saturday, a Sort & Rope on Sunday, with a Saturday night **BBQ-Party-Silent Auction**. A good time was had by all, including plenty of spectators both days, and we were able to raise a little over \$31,000, which will all be dedicated toward infrastructure repair and improvements. The financial reality is that our Equestrian Association is a very lean all-volunteer operation; we have always kept our annual membership fees as affordable as possible [compare it to a gym membership!] and the membership fee income doesn't fully cover the basic operating expenses much less major repairs and improvements. The additional income to support and improve our Equestrian Center comes from facility rental [such as **VPA, On The Bit Shows, Buck Brannaman** and others] as well as SYVEA-Sponsored events. Yes, we do maintain an emergency fund, which is for just that: emergencies. We tapped into it last year when the river burst its banks and drowned our well pump motor.

When we host a fundraiser and ask for donations, how do we spend the money? Our current project goals include continuing to improve our arena footing, repairing our water truck, as well as the cattle handling facilities [back pens] and making a start on our overnight horse pens. These improvements will greatly enhance our ability to host events going forward.

Just prior to the November FUNdraiser, the **Burkitt** family directly donated sand for our Cow horse arena, and **Roger Fortier** generously provided the tractor work to work the new material in to the existing footing. We already have fence pipe material in hand, which was donated by **Craig Braly**, and we also recently received a generous donation of 60+ used panels from **Paul Slavik**. At present we are utilizing some of the donated panels to "test-drive" various locations for where we will ultimately place the permanent welded pipe overnight pens. Possible locations include the fence along Mesa Verde [upper trailer parking area], or more likely, the west fence at the far end of the upper trailer parking area. Both will require trenching and piping to provide water access, the west fence more so, but it is probably the better location. We have already assembled approximately 10 pens along Mesa Verde, with more to come

later. We already have several other pens adjacent to the Cow Horse and Rodeo arenas which we have previously utilized for event overnights. As I write this we have completed welding work on repairing the cattle-handling pens. The intense rain storms over the last couple months have washed away a moderate amount of sand in the Cow Horse and OSD arenas.

In other repair and maintenance news, the large green barn has numerous leaks in the roof [which is vintage] as does the smaller upper barn, and we are currently assessing the most cost-effective and practical way to handle that; there are no inexpensive options. ***If you would like to support this important project with your expertise, donated materials or a financial contribution, please give me a call at 805-570-2350 or drop me an email.*** Our old water truck leaks, and while a brand new one would certainly be nice, we are also looking at replacing the water tank or installing a liner. Huge thank you to **Tim, Barb & Mathew Crist** who have kindly let us utilize their water truck when ours has been offline. Additionally the upper level picnic tables need to be replaced and thanks to last year's deluge, there is a great deal of tree trimming which needs to be done.

Huge thanks are owed to our dedicated Committee who worked day & night to make our **November FUNdraiser** a great success: **Dani Burkitt & Lisa Lyon** [Lisa also designed & created the beautiful logo items] ran the cutting, ably assisted by **Balinda Dickson** in the cattle pens, **Sandy Collier** was our judge, **Howard Erenberg** announced, several of our local trainers [**Rex Rossoll, Jaton Lord & Paul Bonello**] gave many hours to coach competitors & herd hold, **Anselmo Ramirez** organized the Sort & Rope along with obtaining the cattle, **Karyn Stevens** chaired the Silent Auction, **Lisa Lyon** generously shared from her wine cellar for a "Wine Pull," talented bakers **Lisa Byrne, Claire Hanssen, Dawn Peters and the Madonna Inn** created & donated delicious cakes for our Cake Auction, **Barb Crist** did a beautiful job on the décor-- and lent us her festive "**Swig Rig**"—**Lisa Novatt** coordinated the live music with **Brad Cooper, Nancy Hunsicker** handled entries and the show office with **Brandon Bessey's** help, **Elks** did a great job of catering, **Charlotte Becerra** organized vendors, **Dani & Brian Burkitt** donated new sand, **Roger Fortier** donated his tractor time to improve the arena and work in the new material, **Santa Ynez 4H** cleaned up the **Green Barn** and **Santa Barbara Trail Riders** donated the use of their tent. **Nick & Becky Bailey** did a terrific job of making sure our facility was spotless, the footing perfect, outdoor lights [donated by the **Hunsickers**] were strung and the landscaping pristine. Community response and support was strong, with many generous sponsors and donors. Several of our local trainers graciously contributed their time and expertise to make the Cutting a grand success. The Cutting received rave reviews from competitors: "well run and organized...very professional...I will definitely be attending again." The cows proved to be exceptionally cooperative and many people had nice runs. Everyone who competed at the Sort & Rope had a terrific time as well, plus we had an impressively large group of enthusiastic spectators both days.

We are looking forward to a busy 2024, starting with a **Chuy Chavez** reining clinic on **April 24th**, the first **On The Bit Dressage/Over Fences Schooling show** on **March 17th**, VPA events

throughout the year, **more 4H and Youth events**, and our **2nd Annual FUNdraiser Ranch Cutting/SortNRope/BBQ Party & Auction November 2nd -3rd** . Also—drum roll here--The SYVEA will host a **Cutting Series** this year! The **first SYV Cutting will take place on April 13th-14th** and the second is tentatively scheduled for June 1st -2nd ; **Dani Burkitt & Lisa Lyons** are coordinating this series; **Cheri Baldacchino, Nancy Hunsicker and Charlotte Becerra** are also lending their efforts. Please be sure to check out website www.syvea.org for updates and follow us on Facebook—our SYVEA page is: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064532206442> and you can join our SYVEA Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/59081978065>

Our **Annual Membership Meeting & Board of Directors Election** is scheduled for **Thursday April 25th at 6:00 pm in the upper Green Barn**, with board meetings to follow in June, September & November. Please be sure to send in your 2024 membership renewals; even if you do not use the arenas yourself, your support is vital to preserve and enhance this vital resource for our local equestrian community.

Many thanks,

David Hunsicker

President

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Board of Directors:

Howard Erenberg/Treasurer Andi Culbertson Carole Bennett Nancy Hunsicker/Secretary
Charlotte Dicke Becerra Lisa Novatt Danielle Holzer-Burkitt Karyn Stevens

