

# Corral News

December, 2009  
Volume 15, Issue 12



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY RICH GOMEZ

### WHAT A DAY, NO, WHAT A YEAR!

Well here we are about to wrap up another year... hard to believe, but what a great year it was! But don't fret; we've saved the best for last – yep, our traditional Christmas Party is on again this year at the



Cantina. See the newsletter or website for details, but we look forward to seeing each and every one of you there! And don't forget the Cowboy Gift Exchange – just bring a gift you

paid between \$20-\$25 for and let the laughs begin. Sometimes it's kinda tense (because you want that really cool black velvet Elvis), but like our Sergeant-At-Arms says, that's how we roll! And don't forget we'll be announcing our new Board of Directors and the winners of our November election AND the winner of the very special President's Award – given to that member who has just done an extraordinary job of advancing the club in 2009...wonder who that might be?

And what about that First Annual Buckle Playday? Was that a great success or what? Congratulations again to our winners Victoria (under 30) and Patti (over 30, but barely). What a show of competition, horsemanship and support from everyone who was there. We can't wait until next year's event! And we had so many great events in 2009. From our evacuation drill to sensory clinic to our grand Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum, Trail Ride, Mexican dinner and Country Music Extravaganza to our annual

barbeque and horseshoe competition (with one winner; no divisions but of course two different weights of horseshoes) to our support of the National Rescue Ride - it was a great year! And I have it on good author-



ity that we'll be previewing a media rich recap of all these events at our Christmas Party...may even have some copies for sale and you won't want to miss that because I know we probably have a picture of each and every one of you in that presentation.

So I gotta tell you all what a pleasure it's been serving each of you as your president this year – now I got one more year to go and like they say, we're savin'



the best for last. But for today, for now, this has been and continues to be absolutely the best! And it's because of each of you, the participation we get for our events and the support we get from our sponsors. Yeah, our sponsors...like the Rose Canyon

Cantina, O'Neill Regional Park, the Trabuco Canyon General Store, American Horse Products, El Toro Tack & Feed and so many others...(Continued on page 2)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

...what a great community we have and what a great club we all have. A big thanks to each of you for that...

Hey, so I'm sitting here writing this column at Trabuco Creek Road and the bridge; the entrance to Holy Jim Canyon. It happens to be a red flag day so we're out on patrol for Canyon Defense. And while this is not an ETI event, ETI is involved directly through our Mounted Assistance Unit and our overall general concern and participation in our community. I would take this time to encourage each of you to consider how

you can individually reach out in 2010 to your community, your neighbors and your causes that all work to preserve our western heritage lifestyle and equestrian community. It is the cowboy way...

So until we meet again under the mistletoe or the big oak, here's to ridin' together and playin' together; learnin' together and partyin' together...the best and warmest wishes for a wonderful holiday season... here's to bundling up and riding our horses throughout the winter...See you on the trail...



## TRAIL BOSS REPORT

BY DEBBIE KELLY, ASSISTANT TO JEFF KELLY

With this illustrious club of ours being in such demand; we had to postpone not one, but two of five regularly scheduled trail work days in 2009 (that would be August and October). ETI participated in two important equine events and had no control of the dates which resulted in rescheduling our trail work. In order to show our commitment to O'Neill Regional Park, and to do a little "house cleaning" at the arena for our November Play Day, we had an ad-hoc trail maintenance day. I have been participating in trail work in O'Neill (along with several other members) for the better part of fifteen years now. There have been heavy work days with a large presence and equally large projects, and there have been light work days where we went in, did the work, and got out. But I have never walked away feeling I have wasted my time and have always felt like I have given back a little of what I get living and riding here. This month I realized how much I actually have missed this work.

Many of our members and their families use the arena regularly which is a good thing. It is important we demonstrate our appreciation by helping maintain it. It just feels good. That being said, here go the acknowledgement for those who pitched in on November 7th. I really do mean thank you. Thanks to Don, Sheila, and Donny Segien; Rich and Patti Gomez; Kristen Holden and Ian Terry. Kristin is a new member and she brought her son, Ian, along to help. Together we raked up pine needles around the picnic area; "dragged" both round pens, and removed some pretty gnarly boulders from one of them. And if you didn't notice on Play Day; we removed about three wheel barrow's of rocks located along the path as you enter the arena area off of Live Oak. On the Friday before Play Day, ye ole Trail Boss dragged the big arena. Do not fret if you were looking forward to joining us but just could not pull yourself out of bed on a Saturday. There will be several trail work opportunities in 2010!



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY SHEILA SEGIEN

**Very Expired:** (Sorry, last newsletter.) Karin Hathaway 7/09

**Expired:** Robert & Caitlyn Nieblas 8/09, Connie Burns 8/09, Ken Weiss 8/09, Sarah Eaton 8/09, Lori Grossman 10/09, Nancy Johnson 10/09, Leslie King 10/09, Candice Itzkovics 10/09, Dalynn Zampino 11/09, Terri Steuben 11/09

**Expiring:** , Jeff Kermod 12/09

**Welcome New Members:** Jill Corley, Jonette Dopson, Lauren Helsel, Cristi Silverberg-Rose, Steve & Debera Conkling

**Annual Dues:** Individual \$45; Family \$70 for the first two members, add \$8 for each additional family member.

## IMPORTANT DATES

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TODAY (SEE WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

Board Meeting: Thursday , 12/10

Christmas Party: Sunday, 12/13

National Finals Rodeo, Las Vegas: December 3rd-12th

Month End Ride: Saturday, 12/26



## MOTHERS AND SMALL EAST INDIAN KIDS KNOW BEST BY RICK BALTHASER

It's kinda' weird. I'm not really sure HOW I got interested in horses. I didn't grow up around 'em ...

Nor did I really know anyone that owned 'em. When I was a kid, I was much more obsessed with machines that had a motor and two wheels than large animals with four hooves. In my early twenties, and then later when I was raising two sons, I started to seek out horse riding opportunities, usually the occasional trail ride kinda' thing on family vacations. I can still vividly recall galloping flat-out across a beautiful ocean-side meadow in Hana, Maui with my (at that time) twelve and ten year old sons. Dangerous? ... Absolutely. But we loved every second of it, and went back for more the next day.

Fast forward a few years later to a single dad living in a condominium in the Orange Hills near Orange Park Acres. I would go on the rental trail rides at Peacock Hill in Irvine Regional Park, but knew of course that I was merely a passenger on a short 'Nose-to-tail' ride that was mildly enjoyable, but certainly less than rewarding. Fueled by a very healthy Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, I embarked on my own crash-course curriculum on 'All Things Equine'.

So ....I leased my first horse from a tough little horsewoman in OPA. A ten year old Quarter gelding, Black Jack turned out to be a real-good first horse ... and I learned quite a bit from him. We enjoyed a nice relationship, with very few mishaps, and many wonderful rides on the manicured trails of OPA, as well as great rides in Peters Canyon, Irvine Regional Park and Sycamore Oaks Wilderness Park. I remember one trail ride in particular (no, it was NOT the one where I rode off on a 'new-to-the-barn' \$25,000 National Show Horse thinking it was my pal Black Jack ... hey, mistakes happen, right?).

On this particular occasion, while I was riding in scenic Peters Canyon, I rounded a corner in the trail, and

rode up on an East Indian family (complete with sandals, flowing robes and turbans) walking on the trail. I stopped and chatted with them for a bit, and as I rode on I heard their young son who was probably all of five years old, say to his Dad with no shortage of pure awe in his voice: "Dad ... THAT was a REAL COWBOY". And, as I continued down the trail, I sat a little taller in the saddle, smiled and thought to myself: "Well ... at least he didn't mistake me for one of those "Greenhorn, Condo-rentin', Horse-leasin' Weekend-ridin'-kinda' Cowboys" ... (lol) ...

Fast forward a couple of more years ... And well ... here we are ... and man, I gotta' tell 'ya ... life is GOOD ... Good place to live ... Good place to ride ... Good friends ... Good Horse Club ... 'All Good in the Hood!' as we like to say.

And ... I married the woman of my dreams ... just rode my horse up in O'Neill Park with my oldest son ... jumped off the horse, and married the sweet woman. (Well, there was a few family members and friends that just happened to be in the park as well) ...I'm still pinching myself. My kind, wise Mother (who has been married to my Father goin' on 55 years now) shared her sage-like marriage advice with me. At the wedding reception, she took me aside, looked into my eyes, thought carefully for a moment and said: "Rick, DO NOT screw this marriage up". That was it. And with that, she headed off for a Margarita and a dance with one of her grand kids.

Well ... My crash-course curriculum on 'All Things Equine' has now slowly evolved to a patient 'learn about horses as I go' process.

And, I've come to realize that when love and kindness and understanding is invested in relationships and horses, ... well ... to paraphrase a young East Indian friend of mine: THAT is a REAL COWBOY and COWGIRL.

Happy Holidays!...Rick Balthaser



## THE GETAWAY?

BY JAMES IACONO

It was our anniversary this past weekend, and with economic times the way they are, we decided to go on the “cheap”, but, still do something new and different. So we booked Campsite #3 in the Harmon Equestrian Camp Area of O’Neill Park! I know, it sounds kind of crazy, packing the horses, the tack, their food, the dogs, the leashes, their food, our lounge chairs, our tack (never mind), our food, to go less than a mile down the road as a crow flies. But heck, I thought, let’s start a new chapter in our 28 year old book.

We borrowed a camper from my brother-in-law, as my wife never met a chunk of ground she could cuddle. We got there Friday night, settled in by unhooking the trailer, getting the horses comfortable, popping the top of the camper, feeding the dogs, setting the table, starting the bbq (with “coals”), feeding the horses, prepping the sides, chopping some wood, lighting a fire..... are you relaxed yet?

Dinner was acceptable, though the light was bad so I am not sure if I mistook some Kibble for croutons. We cleaned up as best we could, and relaxed by the fire... well if you call relaxing getting up every few minutes to disentangle the dogs who we had on lunge lines to give them some room to roam, only to have their lines tangle around the truck, the trailer, the base of the park bench, the bbq, and each other.

We were just starting to enjoy the “sounds of nature”, when a local Boy Scout troop checked in to set up shop in the adjacent Hickey Camp area. Our horses started pacing and never seemed to get comfortable the rest of the night. We tried listening for the hoot of a gray owl, or the melodic song of the crickets, but soon realized we could not hear a pack of frenetic coyotes in chase of a kill over the fairly constant drone of ...traffic! Are you kidding me? Aren’t we camping in the great outdoors, not the infield at Talledega?

We decided to retreat to the peace and serenity of inside the camper. However, whatever peace was trying to be attained was interrupted every hour by our

dachshund that has a grapefruit size tumor pressing against his bladder. Actually, the tumor has recently been removed, but so has his sanity, so I was stepping out into a 40 degree night every few hours clad in flannel boxers, stumbling after a dog who was desperately trying to find his favorite “pee” patch. Thank God I finally made it to dawn.

What would camping be without a Caramel Macchiato, so I fired up the truck and drove the mile and one half up to the mesa and came back to deliver the fruits of my “hunt” to my betrothed. Being jump-started, we were now ready to tack up the horses and head for the trail. Oh, but what to do with the dogs? So I fired up the truck again and drove them both back home.

We were now ready to go riding, and that we did do....off down the arroyo, finally in a routine that was familiar, the smell of fall tingling our senses, cottontails darting across the trail, a doe and a buck gliding through the brush. This is my park. This is my life. I love it.

But I realized our homes are more peaceful on a weeknight than the regional campground that the people who live in other kinds of homes escape to for their getaway weekends. So next anniversary, I will pitch a tent on my front deck, sleep there at night, and tack up my horses in their barn in the morning, before heading off into the Regional park. Ah, the true definition of having the best of both worlds!





# EVER OWNED AN OTTT?

BY JIM SCHICHT

What is an OTTT? It is an off-the-track thoroughbred horse. We purchased one of these a few years ago. His name is Jager aka Charmer Baron. Charmer Baron was born in March 2000 and ran his first race in 2002. Charmer Baron (Jager) won 3



first places in 5/8 mile and 3/4 mile runs out of 34 starts. Charmer Baron (Jager) had additional 8 seconds and 4 thirds over his racing career. He ran at Hollywood Park, Santa Anita, and Del Mar.

When Charmer Baron's racing career ended in 2005 his name was changed to Jager and he was being retrained for use

as a hunter jumper. That is when we purchased Jager for a hunter jumper career. That came to an end when interest changed to western gymkhana with another horse. Jager has since become my trail horse and he has been to Cooks, on moon-lit rides and up and down O'Neill park trails. I now have to duck under trees, I used to sit up under. That is a 16.1 handicap. Jager has an easy going attitude which says I am retired, no problem. He had his first play day and won a few ribbons--- way to go Jager. Should you need a good all-round horse try an off-the-track thoroughbred horse.



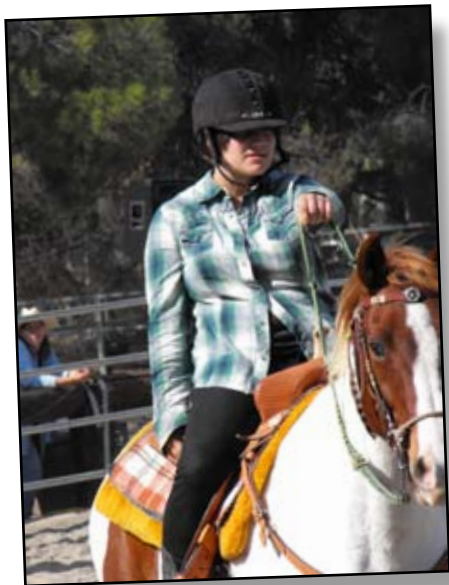
# NOVEMBER PLAYDAY

PHOTOS BY RICH GOMEZ, DONNY SEGIEN, AND DAVE SEROSKI



More Photos on Page 6

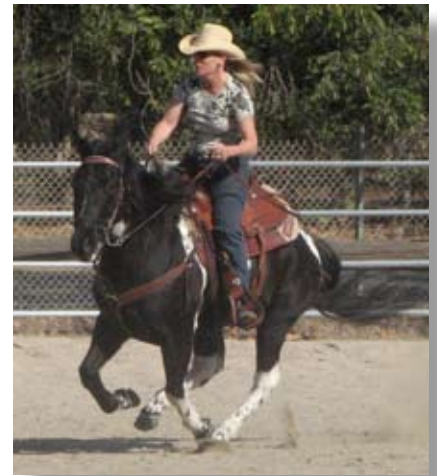
# NOVEMBER BUCKLE PLAY DAY



# CONGRATULATIONS TO ETI 357's 2009 BUCKLE CHAMPIONS



Victoria Ratcliff on Tonka  
Champion, Under 30 Division



Patti Gretzler on Oreo  
Champion, Over 30 Division



Patti and Victoria with Corral 356 President Rich Gomez



## **WHO ARE THE SADDLEBACK CANYON RIDERS?**

The Saddleback Canyon Riders are ETI Corral 357. Established in 1991, we are one of the largest ETI corrals in California with members from South Orange County and points beyond. We are a family-friendly equestrian group based in Trabuco Canyon at the foot of the majestic Saddleback Mountains. Our Corral is committed to supporting and helping maintain O'Neill Regional Park and other local riding trails.

## **WHAT IS ETI?**

Equestrian Trails, Incorporated is a family oriented riding club established as a nonprofit corporation in 1944 with the Charter to be "Dedicated to the Acquisition and Preservation of Trails, Good Horsemanship, and Equine Legislation."

With its combined membership, ETI has successfully worked to keep our trails open and add more equestrian facilities. The more members we have backing equine legislation and trail preservation, the more likely the State, County and City Officials will be to comply with our needs.

ETI Corral 357  
PO Box 1026  
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92678-1026