

# Corral News

Saddleback Canyon Riders | ETI Corral 357



August  
2016

Volume 23  
Issue 8



## Reminds Me of a Story... From the President's Corner

By James M. Iacono

### .....Until We Meet Again.....

Some people that you meet, you'll never forget. They have a way of impressing their joie de vie on your soul. They always seem to have a warm greeting at the ready, a kind word to share, and an upbeat outlook that encourages. Karen Hopkins Balthaser was one of those individuals. We will always be grateful that we crossed her path, and that she gave so much of herself to our Club and our Community. Sadly Karen passed much too early this past month after a valiant battle against the most heartless of all diseases. Ironically, I know of no one who possessed a bigger heart.

In February of 2012, I had the honor and privilege of writing a feature "In the Saddle" article on Karen. We are reprinting it in this edition, because I want to always remember her as she lived- giving, loving, and embracing the path that God put in front of her.

Karen was a long time Club Member and Board Member, and the 2011 recipient of the Club's annual highest honor, "The President's Award." Her service was always efficient, selfless, and purposeful. She could have been awarded this recognition almost every year. In the spirit of her example, and to honor her memory, the 2016 Saddleback Canyon Rider's Board unanimously decided to rename the award, "The Karen Hopkins Balthaser Service Award." I can think of no one more deserving to have their name associated with

what it means to serve with the passion she did.

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#### In The Saddle with Karen Balthaser

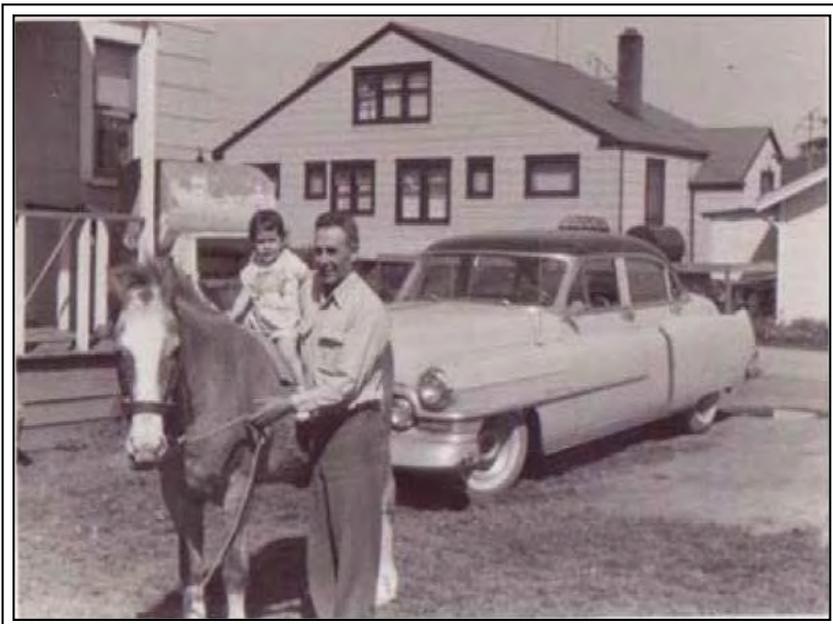
By James M. Iacono  
Originally published in 2012



She opened the door for me, and I was not surprised to be welcomed by a breath of fresh air. Anyone who has spent any time with Karen Hopkins-Balthaser knows what I am talking about. Many of you know Karen as the "organizer extraordinaire" as she fulfills her duties and more as the Club Secretary. But spend a little time with her and you will be infected with her joie de vie, and marvel at that feature she wears so well despite the journey that has led her to our grateful community. I spent some time with her after work one day last week and received some insights into this extraordinary human being that I am honored to share with all of you. No newsletter article

can truly describe the depth and breadth of our 2011 ETI Presidential Award recipient, but I will humbly do my best to give you a flavor that will leave your mouth watered for more.

Karen Bradley was born "several" years ago (the same



year Disneyland opened) in Tacoma Washington with a hint of Blackfoot Indian in her blood. Her earliest photograph on a horse was taken at the age of 2 on Billy, her Grandpa George's ride who was a real cowboy from the Big Sky state of Montana. She knew at an early age that she had an affinity for animals, and being the older sister of three brothers, she got a lot of practice in the "caring for" department. By the time their fourth child came along, her parents, bored with the tedium of raising toddlers, delegated Karen as the surrogate parent of their youngest son. After all, she was mature for her age (five). The family migrated South, first to Las Vegas, then Brea, California, where she would settle in for the next long chapters of her life. She graduated a Lady Wildcat from Brea Olinda high school, and after 4 years of being a part time college student and a rising star in JC Penney's fashion department, she married David, her high school sweetheart. David was an architect and they began building their life together in Brea. Karen continued to get promoted at JC Penney's and had her first son Nicholas at the age of 25. Now that she was home, she began fulfilling a life-long dream-having a mini farm right there in the suburb of Brea. I will get into the cavalcade of varmints that began then later, but nothing could have prepared her for what next happened, as Nicholas was diagnosed with leukemia at 2 ½. Being a parent, I can only imagine what it would be like to have a child with a life-threatening disease.

Karen felt helpless and drained during the initial treatments, and at times wanted the same fate dealt to her that was being dealt to her baby boy. He was a fighter, and survived the initial grueling treatments, and then battled

another relapse at the age of 5. By then, Karen had her hands full with two more little girls, Kirsten and Natalie, and when Nicholas went into remission a second time, she felt they were out of the woods and life could go as planned, and as she always imagined. She always stayed busy, working at her brother's hardware store, tutoring on the side, and offering day care to others in the neighborhood. The mini-farm went into full swing with cats, dogs, rabbits, iguanas, chickens, cockatiels, and even a pot belly pig. The school would have class field trips to her HOUSE. She became a President in the PTA, was a Boy Scout leader, Girl Scout Leader, and a Team Mom (surprise, surprise). She always managed her life so that there were just enough hours in the day.

But life dealt her another blow when Nicholas turned 17. The leukemia resurfaced and the treatments stepped up. He needed a bone marrow transplant, and after a long search, a donor was found out of state. But even after this complicated procedure, Nicholas' body could not fight the cancer as well as the effects of the bone marrow transplant, and he succumbed to their effects 3 years later at the age of 20. Karen says he will always help identify who she is, as he was one special son whose imprint on her and every one he came in contact with was indelible.

Karen returned to college in her forties and received her Bachelor's Degree in English, and then a teaching credential. Her life experiences led her on a path of yearning to help people, especially children. She currently works for Tustin Unified School District as a Para Educator in Behavioral Interventions specializing in Children with Autism. I marvel at people who choose to work with people who are faced with difficult challenges for those challenges then become



theirs also to face and conquer. Without selfless people like Karen, so many in our world would face a lonely hopelessness that would overwhelm them. I salute you Karen Hopkins for doing what you do! Before she landed her current job, she tutored “at risk” kids, taught kids who were under house arrest for various infractions, and also was a teacher at College Hospital for kids dealing with abuse and addictions. You see a common theme here? Karen is one of those special individuals who is willing to be there for those facing all sorts of unfortunate circumstances-an American Mother Teresa! (I know she’ll cringe at that reference, but that’s my impression and I’m sticking to it.)

Karen met Rick Balthaser in 2000 after her marriage with David ended, but Karen and Rick decided to wait to get together until their kids (besides Karen’s two girls, Rick has two boys) were on their way with their individual lives out of the house. When it comes to bringing together a blended family, I can’t think of a better “stir stick” than Karen! Karen says she loves Rick’s spontaneity and easy-going ways, and the fact that he has given her two additional sons. It was Rick’s spontaneity that jelled with Karen’s life-long love for animals that sent them looking for a rural setting out Trabuco Canyon way. She and Rick had gone riding together in Catalina and in Mexico, and Karen longed for the feelings and smells she remembered from her Grandpa’s farm in Tacoma as a child. She loved the pheromone of a horse (doing this interview I learned a new word from the teacher!). After they bought their current home on Adkinson Lane (named for the man who shot the last grizzly bear in Orange County), Rick found a Missouri Fox Trotter named Stormy, and soon after, the neighbors “found” the perfect Fox Trotter for her. His name was Red Touch of Velvet, now known as Sunny. She says that teaching kids with special needs and working with the horses is interchangeable, and she can apply methods learned in each to the other. She does feel that Sunny has an innate sense of wanting to take care of her. Karen had fallen off a horse several years back, and it took a while to get back on. She feels that Sunny assures her that things will be alright when they go out on trail. And for all the loving assurances she gives to family, friends, students, and club members, it’s nice to know that God, after all she has been through, has balanced nature by giving her a “sunny” future.

She loves living in Trabuco Canyon, and feels that this is now her home for the long haul. And for all of us who know her, that too, is like a welcome forecast...clear and sunny with lots of fresh air!



A memorial service and a “Celebration of Life Gathering” took place on July 22nd at Memory Gardens in Brea and Circle S Ranch in Silverado Canyon. Karen’s ashes were laid to rest near her son Nicholas. She is survived by her husband Rick, 2 daughters, two stepsons, two grandchildren, three brothers and numerous nieces and nephews. She will truly be missed by so many, including the Saddleback Canyon Riders.

As was her wish, donations can be made in her name to Make A Wish Foundation.

James M. Iacono  
 President  
 ETI Corral 357  
 Saddleback Canyon Riders





## Horse Sense

By Dave Seroski

# Speaking in the Way of the Horse

This is a thing I have tried to do for many years. My horse, Ted, speaks to me all the time. I understand some, now more & more. My wife, Susan's horse is learning to speak to me, but is unsure of the outcome. But the worry lines have disappeared from his eyes.

When we are left to each other, the language becomes stronger. It is quiet, and we're alone. It is the purity of the horse, the man, the woman who dares to listen. Feel his or her way, and is open to what is next.

The conversation goes like this: we are all walking down the road. Ted is shaking his mane and pulling at his lead. He is telling me, "Let Me Go! I am with you. I need my feet. It is what I feel, I need to run!" But children are nearby. I tell him "no" it is not safe. He tells me, "I have to run." I tell him "OK, soon." He waits. So it is he I release first at liberty.

Max tells me, "he is getting away! I want to run with him." I ask him, "will you come back to me?" In Horse he tells me "No." Then you stay with me. Max goes, "but he is running away!" "No" I tell Max, "we are together. He will not go far and if you and I turn around? He will gallop back to be with us."

Max says, "no way." "Yes," I say, "way. Let's go back and see if he joins us." Soon at a gallop, Ted is with us. Max shakes his mane and nuzzles me. This is a "yes" in Horse. Then Max is set free at liberty. Ted and I know this game and he is happy to be with me, with his lead over his back. We talk freely. "Wow, Max took off." "Yes" I say "he is still learning." Ted points to his side. "I itch here, will you scratch it?" "Yes" I say and I scratch the pointed to area. While doing this Ted grooms my back, or leg with open teeth. Some would fear the open mouth of a horse on there flesh. But as a natural horsemen? I welcome the mutual grooming. In the herd this is an honor and a bond of friendship and trust.

So in the middle of this you come up and want to have a conversation? I hope you can understand why it is short.

Start with sitting in your horse's stall at feeding time. Then just listen, watch, enjoy. The speech process has begun. Where will you take it from there?

Dave Seroski  
ETI Corral 357  
Saddleback Canyon Riders





2016 4th of July Parade & BBQ, Trabuco Canyon, CA

**BACK ON TOP! Saddleback Canyon Riders**  
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- Wednesday:** Trabuco Canyon, Lake Forest, Serrano
- Thursday:** Coto de Caza, Rancho Carillo, Ortega, San Juan Capistrano, Nellie Gail, Laguna



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# SADDLEBACK CANYON RIDERS: Upcoming Events

## AUGUST

Members' Meeting	4	Thursday	7:00 pm	M&C Sports Grill, Dove Canyon	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Pancake Fund Raiser - <i>Setup</i>	5	Friday	5:30 pm	Trabuco Mesa Park,Rancho Santa Margarita	Kristen (949) 444-1990
Pancake Fund Raiser	6	Saturday	5:30 am	Trabuco Mesa Park,Rancho Santa Margarita	Kristen (949) 444-1990
Board Meeting	11	Thursday	7:00 pm	Wilk's	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Afternoon Playday and BBQ	13	Saturday	4:30 pm	O'Neill Park arena	Crystal (949) 207-8921
Month End Ride on Ferber Ranch Preserve	27	Saturday	9:00 am	Meet at end of Trabuco Oaks Drive	Debbie (949) 244-0670

## SEPTEMBER

Members' Meeting	1	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Board Meeting	8	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
9/11 Memorial Event - Ride/Walk/Bike	11	Sunday			Debbie (949) 244-0670
Inner-Coastal/Watershed CleanUp	17	Saturday	7:30 am	Trabuco Creek Bridge	Rich & Patti (949) 888-1604
Park Meeting	27	Tuesday	7:30 am	O'Neill Park Ranger Station	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Month End Full-Moon Ride	30	Friday			Debbie (949) 244-0670

## OCTOBER

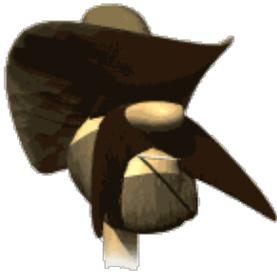
Acorn Day	1	Saturday	10:00-3:00	O'Neill Park	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Members' Meeting and Nominations	6	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Board Meeting	13	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Trail Maintenance	15	Saturday	8:00 am	O'Neill Park	Debbie (949) 244-0670
Imperial Beach Ride	22	Saturday	8:00 am	Meet at CVS parking lot	Crystal (949) 207-8921
Month End Ride on Ferber Ranch Preserve	29	Saturday	9:00 am	O'Neill Park staging for Ferber Ranch	Debbie (949) 244-0670

## NOVEMBER

Members' Meeting and Elections	3	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Buckle Playday	5	Saturday	8:30 am	O'Neill Park arena	Crystal (949) 207-8921
Board Meeting	10	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Ferber Ranch Preserve Ride	19	Saturday	10:30 AM	O'Neill Park staging for Ferber Ranch	Debbie (949) 244-0670
Trabuco Canyon Church Ride	20	Sunday			Debbie (949) 244-0670
Month End Ride	27	Sunday	9:00 am	O'Neill Park equestrian area	Debbie (949) 244-0670
Park Meeting	29	Tuesday	7:30 am	O'Neill Park Ranger Station	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789

## DECEMBER

Board Meeting	8	Thursday	7:00 pm	TBA	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Laguna Niguel Holiday Parade	10	Saturday	TBA	Laguna Niguel	Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Christmas Party	11	Sunday	5:30 pm		Jimmy I (714) 612-1789
Month End Ride	31	Saturday	9:00 am	O'Neill Park equestrian area	Debbie (949) 244-0670



ETI 357

# Horse Playday!



**SPECIAL TWILIGHT EVENT!!**

Saturday, August 13, 2016 at 4:30pm

Registration begins at 4:00 p.m.

Cost is \$7 per event for members, \$8 non, and kids \$5/\$6

Bring someone **new** who signs up for all events, and you get 1 free event!

Preprint your Waiver and Release form from the website to save time...

**Where:** O'Neill Regional Park Equestrian Arena

**What:** Playday Games & Western BBQ

*Poles, Barrels, Quadrangle, Egg and Spoon, Skill Barrels*

Plus special lead line events for kids!

**Any Questions Contact:** James Iacono 714-612-1789

[jiacono@fontissolutions.com](mailto:jiacono@fontissolutions.com) or [www.saddlebackcanyonriders.com](http://www.saddlebackcanyonriders.com) for more info



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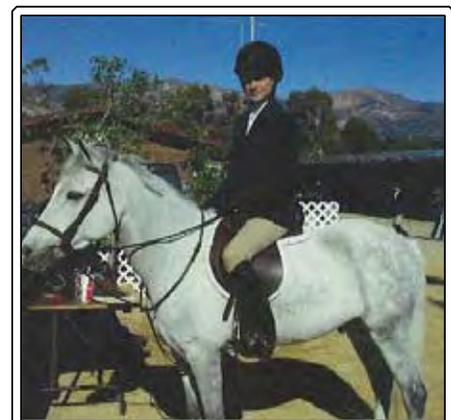
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**Treasurer's Report**

By Vicki Iacono

**FINANCIAL REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING: June 30, 2016**

Ending Bank Balance (Bank of America)	\$8,245.66
<b>DEPOSITS:</b> Deposits Made After Closing: May:	\$0.00
Sub-Total for beginning Balance + Deposits	\$8,245.66

**EXPENSES:**

Ck#	Source:	Reason:	Amount:	Ck#	Source:	Reason:	Amount:
2092	D Seroski	bd dinner	\$50.00	2093	R Gomez	trail maint	\$40.99
2094	S Marruci	dinner	\$50.00	2095	State Farm	trailer ins	\$10.00

Total expenses paid (\$455.50)

**UNPAID CHECKS ISSUED IN THIS PERIOD:**

Ck#	Source:	Reason:	Amount:
2090	ETI	addt insurance	\$126.00
2096	ETI	membership	\$124.00

Total Outstanding Checks - i.e. Spending: (\$250.00)

**Funds on hand in checking:** \$7,995.66  
**Petty Cash on Hand:** \$400.00

**Corral FUNDS On Hand** \$8,395.66

**SUBTOTAL CORRAL FUNDS:**

Less Reserves: \$(476.73)  
 Total Corral Funds Committed To Reserve: \$(476.73)

**NET Funds on Hand in Checking, Petty Cash to credit of: Corral 357** **\$7,918.93**



## 2016 Board of Directors



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Emergency Response Team Communications & Person-at-Large	Dave Seroski	949-533-7153	<a href="mailto:DSeroski@cox.net">DSeroski@cox.net</a>
<b>Other Contacts:</b>			
O'Neill Regional Park	Steve Aleshire	949-923-2259	<a href="mailto:steve.aleshire@ocparks.com">steve.aleshire@ocparks.com</a>
ETI National Office	Debbie Foster	818-362-6819	<a href="mailto:eti@linkline.com">eti@linkline.com</a>
OCFA Station #18(captains)	Greg/Dennis/Nate	949-858-9369	<a href="mailto:greghosburg@ocfa.org">greghosburg@ocfa.org</a>



### Note from the Editor

By Renate Soderstrom



We Love You and Miss You, Karen.





## 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.



**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.

## Saddleback Canyon Riders

ETI Corral 357

PO Box 1026

Trabuco Canyon, CA 92678