



# PONY EXPRESS

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Date: November 10, 2007

## Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association

TRVEA continues to advocate and promote equestrian presence and activities in the Tijuana River Valley.  
CA State Non-Profit #1550287 EIN #56-2619264  
“Securing America’s Heritage”



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## TRVEA Activates Emergency Plan

### Horse Evacuation:

### Speed, Compassion, and Guts.

By John Gabaldon

*Saturday, October 27, 2007:* The Tijuana River Valley’s fast and compassionate response is astounding. The first responders were trailer crews who risked their safety, their expensive equipment, and paid for their own gas—just to drive into harm’s way, literally through fire at times. They drove to evacuate horses and animals whose owners they might never even know. By Sunday afternoon, trailer after trailer left the valley headed into this maelstrom, and their crews worked days and nights until no more in need of rescue could be identified.

Then our private ranch owners sheltered evacuated animals, taking in all who came, also taking all the risks of stabling and caring for expensive and potentially dangerous animals—and most of these valley ranchers provided shelter, food, and professional management from their own funds.

Finally, there are the volunteers who manned phones to direct rescues and interact with networks of agencies (and with other volunteers from all over the region and nation); checked on the ranches and animals; searched for, found, and distributed food and aid to people and animals; and located lost animals. And we can’t forget the many, many people who volunteered to help and wish to apologize to those few who were not called upon to help. I had easily over 100 callers who volunteered to assist. Due to the abundance of volunteers, a few were frustrated when their assistance was unneeded. We wish to thank all of those people who helped and offered to help.

All these factors operated intensively around the clock from Sunday through Thursday, and are, thankfully, over. THANK YOU PEOPLE of the TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY!

At the peak, we received evacuation counts of just under 340 horses and livestock sheltered in the valley’s ranches, and at least another 70 horses at the Imperial Beach Border Patrol Station. The Border Patrol also evacuated horses and livestock, including Winnetka Ranch. Where some animals had to be left behind, Border Patrol agents returned to check, feed and water animals in these remote and dangerous areas. THANK YOU BORDER PATROL!

# Amazing Networks of Volunteers Find, Provide Aid

It's easy to forget, but by Wednesday morning of the firestorm, feed stores had completely run out of hay, and the TRV ranches were rapidly drawing down on their own supplies. Many people from all over San Diego County were calling all their connections to locate scarce hay. Karen Groebli called Duncan Hunter's office (on a tip from the Tynan's) who had just announced emergency hay was coming into the county. Although the senator's staff wasn't sure what this was about, Karen gleaned a mere sliver of information, and by following a tenuous path of clues, found an amazing resource. The San Diego Rescue Task Force had mobilized food supply relief, and late that night, volunteers Vanessa (a Navy surface warfare officer) and Mica (a mechanic) pulled into Suncoast Farms to begin the delivery of 65 bales of grass and alfalfa. Then another group headed by David Shoemaker (a contractor), FEMA workers and church-volunteers—adults and kids—pulled in with the remaining hay and many bags of feed for horses, goats, and birds, plus buckets and salt blocks. The Spurlings provided a distribution area and tools and equipment to move the donated food out to valley ranches.



At Egger's, five families had evacuated from Ramona, some with serious losses, and were camping. Lori Donner (in addition to evacuating horses) was providing aid for these families. Karen worked further with Rescue Task Force and found an emergency relief warehouse who took the families "shopping" for clothes, bedding and other goods. Then RTF provided each of the families with a \$50 VISA card to spend as they needed. (cont'd next page)

## President's Corner

### Others Would Do the Same For Me

What message can tell this amazing story of the Tijuana River Valley's response to San Diego County's animal emergency during the last week of October? Nearly 400 horses (mostly) and other large animals were evacuated into the TRV during the firestorm.

Astounding stories of rescue and volunteerism have come out. Joey and I worked two cell phones, the internet phone, and the home phone at once, to arrange evacuation, rescue, information, and volunteers. I am completely humbled by the number of equestrians from within our valley, county, and even throughout the nation who volunteered their equipment, their space and their labor to help our region survive this disaster. There are so many people to thank---including the many that volunteered and never mobilized---but listing from my memory and missing one person would be terrible.

Besides the people-heroes who performed miracles through the storm, there is a technological hero—the cell phone. As an engineer, I thoroughly had studied the cell phone from semiconductor to cell tower. I knew this technology. My cell phone was often useful, but mostly convenient. But I really didn't get it. During the firestorm, as a network of animal support, we all called from our homes, trucks, food stops, and ranches—sending leads for evacuation and shelter, arranging food and aid, and providing assurances. Mitch Krauss was pulling an 8-horse load through Pennsylvania and pulled over on the roadside to spend over 3-hours on his cell arranging evacuation for everyone he could contact who lives in North County; and he located shelters all the way to Norco!

That is what I mean when I say the cell phone was a technological hero. Tens of thousands of conversations were swirling around us, and through that seeming chaos, an efficient and speedy animal evacuation took place. By the time a trailer unloaded, the crew already had arranged the next pickup. Crews making deliveries diverted to new pickup opportunities. Natural communication nodes emerged when groups of like-services coordinated to prevent overlap—and then dissolved and re-formed into other like-nodes as the storm changed. The chaos was the solution. There were no formal, rigid structures to work through. The structure morphed to fit the hourly need and to facilitate the large government responses. The cell phone puts us in touch with everyone all at once when we need it most. Now I get it.

Now our thoughts naturally turn to how to prepare for the next emergency. In the TRV we are vulnerable also to flood, so we need to take our lessons learned, new experience, and assessments, and discuss how to react to the next problem. It will be difficult to keep this as a hot topic as the winter sets in and we have only slight rains. We have until next summer to figure out how to do better—how to organize and respond even more quickly. TRVEA will help plan our valley's response and looks forward to serving the Tijuana River Valley in this new focus.



--John

(cont'd) At Egger's and Dolly's, Lori Donner received a call from Dave Pistone, with a group named Lifesavers, out of Lancaster, California. In the wee-hours of Thursday morning, they loaded Dave's brand new truck with 50 bales of donated hay (breaking the window of his new truck), and Dave drove it down. Lori's group of Friesian Equestrians worked the distribution--and paid for Dave's window damage.

Later on Thursday a woman named Linda called to say her husband had just driven through El Centro on the way home to San Diego and picked up 10-bales donated by a farmer. They wanted to deliver the hay into the Tijuana River Valley. By late Thursday, feed stores were again full, so Linda's husband took the hay to Campo for relief needed in that area.

By Thursday afternoon, the food shortage had resolved itself, but the amazing amount of energy and cleverness by volunteers had ensured that all the animals in the region never missed a meal. jg

## Tijuana River Valley Ranches Provide Respite from Fires

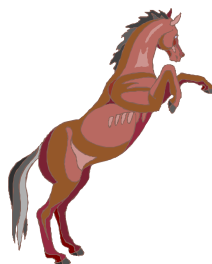
What a wonderful horse community we have! Among the many ranches in the Tijuana River Valley who offered corrals, arenas, and space for evacuated horses without even considering expense, time and effort it takes are:

Campos-Riis Los Amigos Ranch -72 horses; Tim Downing- 15; Corrales- unknown; Chuey of Blanco Bros - 20; Bobbi Wigginton, Wigginton Ranch - 40; Dan & Barbara Murray - 12 ; Rancho Fina - unknown; Mike and Emma Spurling - 67 ; Jim Martin - 10; Tynan - 12; David Egger - 20; Margaret Jackson - 35; Seahorse - unknown; Kmzy - unknown Don and Dolly Opel - 35; Border Patrol - 73 River Valley - unknown.

Please contact Gale Moriarity at 421-4548 or email at [gmoria@hypercon.net](mailto:gmoria@hypercon.net) if you know of others who took in horses. **TRVEA has received donations to help compensate for cost of hay and for manure removal for those who took in evacuated horses.** Also, if TRVEA knows of other ranchers who are willing to help in future emergencies, this will help us update our Emergency Plan. gm

## Horse Hauling Takes on New Meaning!

Victor Beltran, Lori Donner, Linda and Heidi Boswell, Katie Shipley, Emma Reese, Brenda Bernard, Lori Riis, Martha Vargas, Julie Jensen, Tiffany (?), Deanna Opgenorth, Karen Groebli, Mike Spurling, Don and Maryann Taylor, Maryanne (?) Dave LeSage, Judy Coover, Vickie Krauss, The Anderson's, The Salvatorre's, and many, many others have hair-raising and heart-wrenching stories to tell of their horse loading and hauling experiences during the Witch and Harris Fires. Many participated to take horses home, too. We hope to see all of them at the December Awards Potluck so they can share their adventures! If you know of others who drove/handled horses during the fires, please contact Gale Moriarity at 421-4548 or email at [gmoria@hypercon.net](mailto:gmoria@hypercon.net). **TRVEA has received donations to help compensate for cost gas for those who used their trucks to evacuate horses.**



## Want to Be Part of the Emergency Team ?

There is a place to notify TRVEA on your TRVEA Application that you are willing to assist in case of emergency. Our Emergency Plan was written in order to have the infrastructure in place if needed to evacuate horses from the TRV in case of flooding (and in this case fire evacuation). You must be a member of TRVEA to be on the ETeam and have a cell phone. Duties include: driving your trailer; assisting trailering horses; horse handling; feeding/cleaning stalls of evacuated horses; and other duties as needed. If you are interested in being a part of this very important function of TRVEA, contact ETeam Coordinator, Gale Moriarity. gm



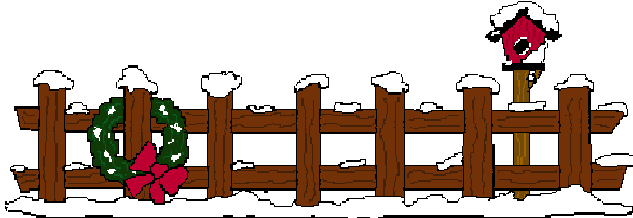
## Schooling Show Soon!

Saturday, November 17, 2007 is our OPEN Schooling Show. There will be something for everyone. The show **sign ups are at 9 am** and the **show begins at 10:00** and will be held at Wigginton Ranch, 2191 Hollister St, SD 92154.

Visit [www.trvea.org](http://www.trvea.org) for a list of the classes and how to WIN in them!! gm

Entry Fees: TRVEA Members: Gate Fee-\$5, \$5/Class

Non-TRVEA Members: Gate Fee - \$5; \$10/Class



## Raffle Donations Needed

Our ever-popular RAFFLE will take place during the festivities at the Christmas Party. If you have an item you would like to donate for this raffle, please contact any of the Board Members (See BOD Box on page 1) We have had donations in the past from the sublime (silver buckles!) to the ridiculous. Your donation does NOT have to be horse-related. gm

Visit [www.trvea.org](http://www.trvea.org) for more information.



## Christmas Potluck and Awards Party



Our annual Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, December 8 from 1 – 3 at the Ranger Station at 2721 Monument Road, SD 92154. All TRVEA Members are welcome and you may bring a guest as well. **All who assisted with the evacuation are invited. Everyone, please be sure to RSVP so that we can plan for all.** Our Potluck Coordinator is Gale Moriarity. Please contact Gale at 421-4548 or [gmaria@hypercon.net](mailto:gmaria@hypercon.net) with what you would like to bring and how many in your party. TRVEA will provide the meat dish and beverages.

Our ever-popular RAFFLE will take place during the festivities so bring some cash. If you have something to donate, please call Mary Christensen at 858 549-3872. Raffle proceeds will go to the Emergency Plan Fund if we still need \$\$ to cover expenses incurred during the rescue efforts. gm

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