

A big stink

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Manager David Kiff, the law's enforcement was not imposed for city beautification purposes, but rather for environmental reasons. Recently, Newport Beach has become concerned with water drainage conditions and their impact on the ecological system relating to the Clean Water Act.

Ironically, it was the preservation of that very ecological system that had brought Cheryl and her horse to the Back Bay that day. Cheryl works as a contract instructor giving ecological and environmental awareness rides for local cities, including Newport Beach, and was there that day on behalf of a sister city, giving instruction on the vulnerability of the ecosystem.

The issue for the city, according to David Kiff, is that they are held accountable for the levels of fecal coliform that are present in the Back Bay. Waterfowl, sewage leaks, excessive runoff from heavily watered fertilized grounds,

and pet excrement are all common contributors to the area's fecal coliform levels. Though he concedes that not all fecal coliforms are harmful to humans, in order to stop citing equestrians he would need reputable studies demonstrating that horses emit no fecal coliforms at all.

Such a standard is unreasonable according to Connie Berto, a founding member of EnviroHorse, an organization dedicated to education of the impact of horses to the environment. The standard should be limiting the presence of only those fecal coliforms found to be dangerous to humans, such as Giardia, C. parvum, Cryptosporidium, E. Coli, and Salmonella, and in amounts that would be deemed dangerous. Berto states, "There is no danger from the fecal matter of horses as they contain no significant measurable amount of these dangerous coliforms. In fact not only do they not produce dangerous amounts of coliforms, only 2% of horses have been found to emit any fecal coliforms whatsoever."

Horses are herbivores and not carnivores (like humans and dogs). Their digestive system uses very

few enzymes, creating waste that is little more than poorly digested vegetation. Coliform bacteria commonly encountered, necessary and beneficial organisms that help most normal species digest their food.

The Orange County Equestrian Coalition, represented by President Tom Anderson, paid Cheryl's citation, which entitled her to a hearing on January 20th. City Manager David Kiff stated that this hearing was not to decide if the ordinance is appropriate, only if she is guilty of the violating ordinance.

This was disappointing to Tom Anderson and Cheryl Skidmore since they currently have no opportunity to challenge the ordinance, which they feel, is not conducive to significant environment impacts. Even more frustrating for them, last November their organization spent a day cleaning up the local trail and the Back Bay. On that day they found the most common visible pollutant was the non-biodegradable plastic bags provided for dog owners to pick up their pet excrement. Even

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Barn raising

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by 9 inch steel structure was erected by a group of 12 volunteers out of materials donated entirely by local vendors and manufacturers, to benefit the abused, neglected and emotionally troubled youths residing at the ranch. After one and a half years of careful planning, the 12-foot tall barn emerged in just one day. The building will be home to the four horses that comprise the ranch's therapeutic riding program, which offers young residents, who range in age from 6 to 12, the opportunity to build character and discipline through grooming, caring for and riding the animals. "It is fantastic," says Jacqui Moreland, director of the program. "The barn provides opportunity for the children to be with the horses more often and provides wonderful coverage for the horses." The barn, although a collaborative effort, was the brainchild of Mike and Kim Regan. Mike, a

retired steel worker, now owns SeaQuine Barns, which donated labor, coordinated suppliers, and supervised the project. His wife Kim, a former Canyon Acres volunteer, feels that the barn is the couple's long-desired gift to the community. Canyon Acres Children and Family Services was founded in 1980 to provide homes, care, treatment and supportive services for abused, neglected and emotionally troubled children and their families in the Orange County, Calif. area. The organization operates a residential treatment center, which houses 30 children, located on a 4.6-acre ranch in Anaheim Hills. In addition, it runs two community-based group homes, where children begin the process of transitioning back into the community and learn how to live as a family. Finally, Canyon Acres provides services to children and families through the Foster Family and Wraparound programs.

To find out more about this story, log on to www.canyonacres.org. [S]

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