



September 2017

# BRASS OAK DRIVING SOCIETY

## Alamo Fire

By Lil Clary

Photo credit Dave Clary

Last month, several of my cell phone photos of the Alamo fire were in the newsletter. I'd wanted to write a short note for publication then but handling the aftermath of the fire and an out of town trip prevented me from getting anything ready.

Actually, that's good because it has given me time to think beyond the chaos of having the fire literally in our back yard.

We've had to take our mules out because of wildfire 4 times in the 20 years we've lived in Tepusquet Canyon. We have been fortunate in that in three of those years the fires were close but not wind driven. This time, however, the fire jumped from 12 miles away to two miles in the space of 24 hours. At noon on July 7<sup>th</sup> when we could first see the smoke cloud, my husband and I had one of those simultaneous premonitions (along the lines of 'I don't feel good about this, let's move the critters to safety') and decided that he would haul the mules out. By the time my husband returned home about 4 p.m. flames were within sight.

We ourselves have not evacuated, even under mandatory evacuation orders. We've done more than the required vegetation clearances, we have 200 feet of fire hose, and we have supplies of thermal barrier to spray on surfaces. Our feeling is that we are ready to protect our place and that most likely we're going to be on our own as getting fire crews into Tepusquet Canyon is a logistical nightmare.

I will tell you though that when the incident commander pulled the air tankers on Saturday and the power went out and when we could see and hear the flames crackling, I questioned our sanity.

That said, what I really want to do in this note is write about preparations. Over the years, we have developed checklists for fire emergencies. We refine them each year and update them. One covers what to do if a fire starts on the canyon road below us, the "5 minute warning"; another gives us a list of tasks to perform if we have several hours to prepare. Here are just some of the items on the latter list:

- Turn off all outside faucets that are on timers
- Unlock barn and workshop doors
- Move vehicles & equipment to open space away from the barn & house
- Drag flammables into the garden (gas, diesel, plastic furniture)
- Close all doors and windows at the house

Having a checklist allows us to more-or-less calmly address each task without having a panic attack. A critical point about the checklists is that we have pre-determined WHO makes what decisions and/or WHO does each item. No sense getting into a stress-caused argument when the total focus needs to be on getting the job done. The list also specifies the priority of tasks so that if just one of us is home the most critical items are addressed.

*Continued next page.....*

**Alamo Fire continued....**

Equally important to my mind is the Fire Season checklist. We review that list on Memorial Day—easy to remember and the end of May is generally when agencies declare fire restrictions. This is the list where we specify all those details like checking in with the boarding stable where we take the mules to make sure that they can take us in in an emergency. In our experience, it takes time for fire management to gear up for critters. You know that some agency will announce that the fairgrounds or rodeo grounds are the designated location, but when you are in the midst of loading & hauling out, you'd better have a specific place to go. This list also has tasks like rolling out & testing the fire hoses and stirring the thermal barrier gel to make sure it won't clog the spray systems.

Spending time on preparation is critical. If all a person does is sit down and think about what has to happen to protect animals or structures, common sense will dictate a pretty thorough list of tasks that apply to your specific circumstances. But don't stop there. Walk through the processes, get a feel for whether your plan is workable. We discovered that the amount of time necessary to drive to the public roadway to lock our gate open (so fire crews could reach us) & get back to the house was nearly 20 minutes. In a situation where only one of us was home & the fire was imminent, that task would be scratched from the list.



Finally, a shout out to HEET! BODS members are active. We trailer our animals a lot & make sure that our rigs are ready to roll at all times. But we all have neighbors whose rigs sit for months unused.

**Welcome to new member Sandra Singleton from Nipomo.**

**Also, welcome back member Cheryl Alley from Arroyo**

**Grande. Glad to have you both in the club.**

**2017 Officers****President**

Lilla Hewitt  
805-463-2342  
lillathomason@gmail.com

**Vice President**

Judith Baron  
805-466-7787  
Championspirit@aol.com

**Treasurer**

Linda Fairbanks  
805-237-8476  
lkfairbanks@gmail.com

**Secretary/Membership**

Gloria Walter  
805-467-9204  
elvis1@wildblue.net

**Newsletter**

Kathy LaChaine  
805-703-0743  
klachaine@charter.net

**Directors at Large**

Jackie Pamplona  
805-481-8154  
jpamplona@earthlink.net

Deb Hilberg  
805-610-5938  
d.hilberg@att.net

Stephanie Szabo  
805-460-0242  
chiroptdc@aol.com

Margie's Restaurant, SLO August 16, 2017

Members: Liz Miller, Gloria Walter, Ann McClure, Debra Hilberg, Judith Baron, Jackie Pamplona, Disa Thorensen, Else Wolff, Lilla Hewitt, Stephanie Szabo, Larry & Kay Weeks and guest Sandra Singleton.

President Lilla Hewitt called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**Minutes** – The minutes from the July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved as presented.

**Treasurer's Report** – Gloria presented the Treasurer's Report prepared by Linda Fairbanks, on file.

### **Old Business –**

Dressage/Pleasure Driving Show in 2018 at Paso Robles Horse Park – As a follow-up to the suggestion at our previous meeting that we consider having a show in April of 2018, Diane Kastama put together a list of ideas and suggestions in writing, presented by Lilla in Diane's absence. She has asked Kathy LaChaine to be Secretary, which she is considering. Diane would act as Show Chairman with the provision that it be set up as a charity horseshow to benefit USDFD, to be approved by the club. Motion was made by Ann, seconded by Jackie, that this show be approved as a fundraiser for USDFD, unanimously approved.

Volunteers so far are Aleks as Volunteer Coordinator, Mike Rumley as Announcer and Dressage scores. We will need a Pleasure Show scorekeeper. A list of volunteer positions will be posted so members can sign up. Accommodations for the judges can be either a vacation rental or a suite at La Quinta Inn. Diane made suggestions on entry fees and stabling and will talk to Amanda at PRHP re costs for the facility. More discussion on types of classes and other details will be scheduled at our upcoming meetings. An outline of what is proposed will be prepared and distributed to club members shortly.

Buddy Buggy Days/Harness Fitting/Carriage Suitability Clinic – Diane has agreed to chair this clinic at Ann's. Possible dates are September 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>. Also offered will be the Super Reinsmanship Test #1 and also cones/obstacles will be set up. Since the mini horse group in the club has expressed interest in this type of clinic, we should check their availability on either of these dates.

### **New Business –**

CAA's Brewster Carriage Drawing Project – CAA is asking for donations to preserve and digitize carriage drawings in coordination with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Motion was made by Ann, seconded by Disa, that we donate \$100 to this project. Approved unanimously.

### **Calendar of Club Events –**

November – Turkey Trot Drive in Parkfield – Lilla suggested this be a one-day event. Possible dates TBD shortly.

**Other Driving Events – See calendar on last page of newsletter.**

### **Announcements/Reports**

Ann stated she has 2 CD's on Cones and Dressage that members can borrow.

August 5 – Triple Crown Clinic - [www.shadyoaks.com](http://www.shadyoaks.com) - cancelled

August 12-13 - HDT at Clay Station- Lilla volunteered on Saturday and drove on Sunday. She also participated in the Plumas Sierra County Fair.

Other Reports – Horse/mule trainer Lou Moore was injured in a fall and is recuperating from cracked ribs and surgery at home. Linda Fairbanks suffered a stroke and is home from the hospital and healing well. Kay & Larry Weeks advised members that their daughter is undergoing treatment for cancer and that a 'gofundme' account has been set up to help the family with expenses. A notice with contact information will be sent to members.

We welcome new member Sandra Singleton who joined the club tonight.

**Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be at Stephanie Szabo's place in Atascadero on Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. Bring your own food at 6pm for dinner and meeting will start at 7pm.

**Adjournment** – Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gloria Walter, Secretary

## Adventures with Jacobo by Lilla

One of the perks of working as a 10 month employee (for the school district) is getting summers off. But this year the district started a huge upgrade and maintenance, that was long overdue, and I got to work thru the summer.

Early in August, I was able to take a week off to attend the pleasure show at Plumas-Sierra County fair (in Quincy) and then end the week at the second HDT at Claystation (near Wilton).

The Plumas-Sierra County fair is dear to my heart as I lived in Quincy for 8 years and have attended most of the fairs over the 8 years that I have since moved back home. My horse, 'Jacopo' was born just across the meadow from the fair and it was the first Driving show I entered after starting him in harness 4 years ago.

The show offered 4 classes; cones, reinsmanship (on the rail. Walk, trot), obstacles, and gamblers choice. Two horses (a friesian, and my Morgan), two ponies (haflingers), a pony pair, and about 5 VSEs participated in the show. The arena would have been great to ride in but those little horses had to work hard pulling their carts through the sand.

The one fun thing about the sand was that the carriage really flung the sand as it came around the corners. So much for the clean carriage that I had taken the time to dust off! The cones were set at a width for everyone and had some fun design were you had to know where you were going to take them in order. Jacobo felt good and we ended up winning the class! I was very excited by this as the man who placed second is the "one to beat".

I felt good going into reinsmanship, as Jacobo and I had won this class two years ago and I was trying a new outfit that I thought looked nice. Jacobo was great but we ended up behind a slower carriage and I had to make a few circles and passed the slower carriage, only to then have a change in direction and end up behind the same carriage again. We ended up placing second (after "the man to beat") and I think that it had to do with me getting bound up behind the other driver.

Things were feeling really good and I felt like I could make a run for the All Around belt buckle, when I entered the obstacle class. The class started with "watering" some flowers that were sitting on a barrel. Walk up, halt and stand, water plant. Perfect. Trot from the flowers around on the rail to the set up jumping standard and back up to the standard. Beautiful strong trot, come in and pivot to get lined up, and back. That's when I wish that I would have brought my 2 wheel cart instead of the marathon carriage. That sand was so deep that Jacobo was not having it and only got a few jackknifed backward steps. "Ok, that's just one element, I can make it up on another". Pick the trot back up and head for the cloverleaf barrels. Perfect. Start heading to the parallel poles, and realize that I need to do the "L" poles first. So, we make a circle to get lined up to enter the "L", enter, and totally miss the turn to go out! So now Jacobo is on one side of the polls and the carriage is on the other side. Now what? I decide to try backing him back into the polls, which he does and we still run it over getting out. Okay, on to the last; parallel pulls set about a foot apart and the driver then puts one side of the carriage wheels between the polls without running them over. Me, on the other hand, completely miss even getting my wheels near the obstacle! There went "my" belt buckle. At least I looked good doing it.

Gamblers choice used the same obstacles but each were given a point system and the goal was to get the biggest score in 2 minutes. Things did go better and I actually did make the "L" several times but I still was out of the ribbons.

I spent the rest of the week in Quincy and entered the ridden Pleasure show and the trail class. We actually didn't place last in several of the pleasure classes, and the trail class was very fun, though Jacobo didn't think that he could canter and didn't totally understand that the point was to step over and not on the ground poles. He did have a great back, and side pass to the mailbox, and hardly hesitated at the pool noodle tunnel.



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Continued from last page....



We also went on a 10 mile trial ride up on the Pacific Crest Trail. It's I hike that I did many times when I lived in Quincy and I thought it would be good for us as it was mostly at a gradual slope and the footing okay as he isn't in shoes. I strapped on my helmet and wrote my mother-in-law's phone number on his front left hoof; just in case we didn't come back together. I wasn't sure that we would even make it out of the parking lot and onto the trail as there were large boulders at the trail head to keep people from taking their motorcycles up the old fire lookout road that makes the trail. Jacopo was sure that those boulders were trolls. But, I was able to help him thru it and up the trail we went. Jacopo isn't a fan of logs, especially those that have been cut in half, but I assured him that he needed to work thru that as we were on a trail in the woods. When we got to a tree that had fallen over the trail and had not yet been removed, I though "oh oh" but he didn't break stride. I also knew that there were at least two other people hiking as there were two cars in the parking lot. Jacopo hardly looked at the dog, that was hiking with his owner, and came barking at us. Shortly after we met a couple who were on their way back down the hill.

After making it to the top, we made our way back down the hill, and Jacopo really walked out. I was on the lookout for backpackers as those who are backpacking from the Mexico boarder to Canada are just reaching this area of trail. We came across 4 different hikers who moved off the trail for us to pass and Jacopo hardly batted an eye at these "strange" people wearing backpacks in the middle of the woods. As we got back to the trail head, some backpackers had decided to take an afternoon nap in the shade before starting their uphill climb. Jacopo looked at the people laying on the ground and then over to the trailer, then back to the people, and then decided that the people could be "ignored" in order to get to the trailer. The day will forever be a favorite memory of mine!

At the end of the week we made our way down to Claystation and volunteered (and cheered on other club members who were driving) on Saturday and drove on Sunday. Aleks and my mom came up Sunday to help me out and cheer me on. I was excited for dressage as I had improved last time and where Jacopo and I had been together all week I felt like we might be able to improve some more. We didn't. When we walked at "C" he tried to leave the arena and his walk was painfully slow. As in every step was threatening to stop slow. We did have good geometry though, and our score wasn't that bad but I had hoped to improve. I did make time on the very fun cones course.

For the marathon portion, I knew that we were going to be slow and I was going to be okay with that. Several sections were on the gravel driveway and I know that that slows Jacopo down (I have bought boots for him but his feet are too large to fit them). It was also quite warm but "only" in the low 90s, and at May's HDT we had made time but he was tired and this time I wanted to put in a walk break or two. He actually was quite game and trotted alongside the driveway and we had our smoothest obstacles to date. If he did break to a walk with in them he came right back up to a trot with out prodding. I think he did appreciate his couple of short walk breaks and we ended up trotting in 3 minutes slower then the time window, so we got penalty points, but I overall felt good about what we did get done. We ended up finishing 3rd out of 3 but I wasn't that far behind the 2nd place finisher.

The whole week was a wonderful way to end the summer before having to buckle back down and help get the school ready for the teachers and students to return.

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Kay & Larry Week's daughter has been diagnosed with aggressive cancer and is scheduled for lengthy treatments of chemo and radiation. Dina has 3 children of her own and her family is helping as much as they can. Even though her husband has medical insurance through work, it doesn't cover her. Dina's sister has set up a GoFundMe website, link shown below, and they are asking for any donations you wish to give and, of course, your prayers for Dina's recovery.

Kay and Larry are traveling back and forth from Paso Robles to Gilroy to be there for Dina's treatments. They are doing their best to care for their horses and other responsibilities here, but if anyone has some extra time to help out at their place in Whitley Gardens, it would be most appreciated.

Please feel free to call Kay at: 1-408-612-6325.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f4ett5-lets-help-dina-kick-cancers-but>

## Driving/Riding Foxhunt in Reno, NV.

Hello Driving Enthusiasts-

As promised, here is the information about the Inaugural Driving Foxhunt Weekend at Red Rock Hounds in Reno, NV. Go to: <http://www.redrockhounds.com/events/images/2017-rrh-a-weekend-of-hunting.jpg>

Dates are Oct 21/22 and it promises to be a fantastic, fun driving experience! Step out of the box and engage in the exciting, beautiful sport of Foxhunting. Go at your own pace on the miles and miles of firm sand roads while following the hounds. Slow and fast welcome. For more information about The Red Rock Hounds please visit our website at [www.redrockhounds.com](http://www.redrockhounds.com)

We may fill up so please be sure to RSVP as soon as you can.

Please email me with any questions at all and rsmps.

Hope to see everyone there!

~ Carrie Barrett

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**Pamela Miller-Mitchell is our Pacific Region ADS rep.**

**Pamela can be reached at 818-899-0211 or [pam.hei@verizon.net](mailto:pam.hei@verizon.net)**

Greetings to all past, present and future volunteers,

The 2017 Shady Oaks CDE is scheduled for September 28 - October 1.

Volunteers are a major part of a Combined Driving Event and they are ALWAYS needed. If you are not competing this year, and available to volunteer, we would LOVE to have you! Please sign up and remember friends are always welcome!!

We want to thank our past volunteers and for always doing a great job! We would also like to take the time to thank our Organizer, Ellen Ettenger, who has done a fantastic job the last few years. Of course we cannot forget to thank our wonderful staff who will be here to provide the structure for many other successful events.

As you already know, Volunteers are a MAJOR part of any Combined Driving Event. NO experience is necessary for many jobs, just the willingness to learn. As a volunteer, you receive morning coffee and lunch for the day(s) worked. If you volunteer multiple days you will also receive dinner(s). We will also offer additional perks (shirts, multiple dinners) as we have in the past.

See the Shady Oaks website for more info. [www.shadyoaksevents.com](http://www.shadyoaksevents.com).



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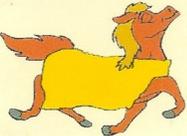
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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS – BODS – 2017**




**(Needed: organizers and co-organizers at events).**

Sept 16 or 17 Harness Fitting/Carriage Suitability Clinic @ Ann McClure's

Nov—Parkfield Turkey Trot Drive (details tba)

Dec— Holiday party (tba)

# About Brass Oak Driving Society

*The Brass Oak Driving Society exists to encourage, educate and inspire its members in the world of carriage driving. We recognize that every member has different goals, and we are committed to providing opportunities for every member to participate, learn and grow in a safe, friendly and fun way.*



## Brass Oak Driving Society Membership Form

*Yes, I/we want to join the Brass Oak Driving Society. Memberships are for one year beginning January 1st and ending December 31st. New subscriptions or renewals paid after November 1st will apply to the following year. No refunds on membership. Make check payable to BRASS OAK DRIVING SOCIETY.*

*Please mail to:*

*Gloria Walter*

*6268 Hog Canyon Rd.*

*San Miguel, CA 93451*

\$35 membership with newsletter via email

\$50 membership with newsletter via USPS

**NAME(S):**

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**CITY, STATE, ZIP:**

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**TELEPHONE(S):**

*Check here if you do NOT wish to be included on the club roster. This roster is distributed to club members only.*

### BODS Newsletter Advertising Rates

**CLASSIFIEDS (3 ISSUES):** *No charge for members. \$5 for non-members with a 25 word maximum.*

**BUSINESS ADS (6 ISSUES):** *No charge for members. Non-members: \$25 business card ad*

*\$50 quarter page ad*

*\$75 half page ad*

## Driving Events around the region:

Sept 28-Oct 1 Shady Oaks CDE [www.shadyoaksevents.com](http://www.shadyoaksevents.com)

Oct 21-22 Drive ride Foxhunt—Reno NV (see pg. 4)

Oct 28 Halloween Hustle [www.whiprsnappers.com](http://www.whiprsnappers.com)

Oct 29 Dressage Fest to follow Halloween Hustle

Oct 28-29 HDT Clay Station

**Pacific Region ADS calendar:**

[http://www.americandrivingsociety.org/regn\\_pacific.asp](http://www.americandrivingsociety.org/regn_pacific.asp)

*Next Meeting: Stephanie Szabo's place in Atascadero  
on Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.*

*Bring your own food at 6pm for dinner and  
meeting will start at 7pm.*



Brass Oak Driving Society has a Facebook Page! Please like our Page if you are a Facebook person. If you aren't a Facebook person, you can still view the page by going to [www.facebook.com/brassoakdriving/](http://www.facebook.com/brassoakdriving/). It is a work in progress but the idea of it is to be one more place to reach current and prospective members. Content will include club event announcements, other driving events in the state, and a place for club members to post photos of their latest horse escapades. There is also a link to the clubs website so that prospective members can find out more information about the club.