
From: Claudia Berglund
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 11:22 AM
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Cc: OCF Executive
Subject: The Victory At The Fair horse show June 15-16

To the Board:

I write to express my concerns about the impact of actions taken by Michelle Richards in the middle of my show on Saturday that were very disruptive.

During 2023 I spoke twice at Board meetings about my desire to host shows at the Equestrian Center. Starting in January I began negotiating a contract to hold a show. In March we settled on a date in June. It took until May to actually finalize a contract. The Fair staff said all of the right things about community involvement and I believed them. I personally underwrite the shows, so the financial risk of failure is mine. I have managed shows in Southern California since before the turn of the century, and the first one was at Orange County Fairgrounds. The contract negotiations took a long time because the Fair staff has virtually no understanding of horse shows.

I had some negative feedback from the community about the condition of the arena footing. When I reached out to the staff they engaged a very qualified footing specialist who was able to complete the work the week before my show. The footing concerns likely negatively impacted my entries, but there was enough interest to go for it. The hope was to have a happy organized show and grow from there.

Things were going pretty smoothly when Michelle arrived and personally served several of my participants with eviction notices, including Sarah Klifa who had ten horses entered, mostly ridden by children. She was served while warming up a child to compete in front of all of the parents and children. As you can imagine this was very upsetting and disruptive to everyone. I was very proud of Sarah for re-grouping and continuing. The disruption caused the show to take over two hours longer than planned.

I believe that Michelle's actions were intended to sabotage my show. The delay cost me money, and I got no additional entries after that. The result was direct personal financial damage to me.

I feel betrayed because everyone said all of the right things about involving the community and making equestrian sports accessible, and then your CEO drops a very public ugly bomb in the middle of it.

Claudia Berglund

Victory Horse Shows LLC