Bixby, Julia

Subject: FW: Animal Services Case # A21-076445

From:
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 9:57 AM
To: Koens, Christopher <Christopher.Koens@sbcphd.org>
Subject: Re: Animal Services Case # A21-076445

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

name + booking

Date Stamp/Initials

Santa Barbara County PUBLIC Health DEPARTMENT

SBCAS Santa Barbara COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

ACTIVITY __-_____

WITNESS STATEMENT

Today's Date: 9/9/2021

WITNESS

Name [redacted]

Address [redacted]

City/Zip [redacted]

Home Telephone [redacted]

Work Telephone _____

Email: [redacted]

ANIMAL OWNER (Check here if unknown ·)

Name Bob Sweeny.

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Home Telephone _____

Work Telephone _____

Email: _____

DESCRIPTION OF ANIMAL(S) INVOLVED IN INCIDENT

Breed Quarter horse.

Color tan

Size 15H.

Sex Gelding

Age 28?

Name Jack

Is this your animal? ·Yes ·No (Now is.)

Breed Quarter horse.

Color Paint

Size _____

Sex Gelding.

Age _____

Name Bisquit

Is this your animal? ·Yes ·No

WITNESS STATEMENT CONTINUED

sore / skinny etc. / after talking to the original owner I was told Jack was only to be in sand small children / and a very small amount of riding. At that time a few employees were very upset over Jack being under Bob Sweeny's care. They managed to talk him into releasing Jack. At that point the land owner [redacted] / and employee [redacted] rushed to haul Jack to my property a [redacted]. Jack was sore and thin, he rested up and we got him back to a good healthy retired life.

The next horse at the time is Bisquit he has bowed tendons. Working him in the river bed trails he not what he is meant for right now. One evening Bisquit was in so much pain he couldn't get to water or food. [redacted] called me and we decided to ask Bob to call a vet - Bob said he's fine and refused - so we did (as per her lease agreement) Dr. [redacted] came that evening and treated Bisquit. I will let you read the report - there is also a recording.

3

WITNESS STATEMENT CONTINUED

he came back to Bobs 5 days later. they continue to use him - every evening he is in so much pain. Its terrible. I have multiple photos + screenshots of Evidence but Im not sure if your office has already recevid them.

On Wed, Sep 8, 2021 at 9:40 AM Koens, Christopher <Christopher.Koens@sbcphd.org> wrote:

Thank you for your timely response. Please forward all of your records and evidence so that I can add it to our case file. I have attached a witness statement to be completed as well. Once the form is completed it may be returned by email, fax, or Officer pick-up.

C. Koens

Animal Control Officer II

Santa Barbara County Animal Services

805-934-6119 ext 7

From:
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 9:27 AM
To: Koens, Christopher <Christopher.Koens@sbcphd.org>
Subject: SYV Rides

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I will be sending you information that I have in a couple hours, I have a meeting at , soon. To show them what I have regarding their visits.

I'm the one who took on "Jack" -6 months ago from Bob Sweeney. So I can be a witness to that case as well as what I saw on Monday 9/6/2021

Thank you,

September 13, 2021

To: SBC Animal Services

Attn: Aubree Gonzales

RE: Activity # 21-076445

Witness:
Animal Owner Bob Sweeney

Business Owner of SYV Horseback Rides
1400 W. Hwy. 246
Buellton, CA 93427

Dear SBC Animal Services Staff:

I'm the owner of **Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides LLC**, which opened in December 2020. I am also owner of **Santa Barbara Beach Horseback Rides** based in Summerland, which gradually took shape over a few years but essentially started offering daily beach rides in 2008, and is going strong today.

I have owned and bred high-end show and breeding horses for 41 years, am a highly-regarded bloodstock agent having evaluated, sold and managed hundreds of top show and

breeding horses over those years, and sold many millions of dollars worth of horses. I am also a lameness and wellness expert, and have an accumulated knowledge base on par with many veterinarians. Plain and simple, I know horses.

I envisioned the new SYV Horseback Rides to be a bit different than other typical trail riding businesses. Because of my extensive knowledge of the central coast horse community, and the great number of breeds and famous horses that have resided here, I opted to collect a riding string of older, former champions from the various breeds known to the Santa Ynez Valley. With that unique perspective also comes the inherent challenges of accommodating the different horse breed temperaments, plus the obvious responsibility to provide the extra care, nutrition, guided exercise, farrier and veterinary support that is required to manage older horses. We essentially operate like a horse rescue, but take it a step further by offering safe, guided pony and trail walks on these retired champions. It was a broad and challenging thing to successfully take on, but we have accomplished it on a very grand scale. And smack-dab in the public eye!

Since last September, 2020 when we began assembling the herd, and training and conditioning to open Thanksgiving weekend, we have acquired – by purchase or lease – 22 horses and returned 9 horses to their previous owners due to not being suitable to join our trail ride string. The primary reason we found them unsuitable was their lack of serviceable soundness, inability to maintain weight and muscle, or

unsuitable temperament. This is to be expected of an older horse who has already had a long career either as a show horse, rodeo horse or working ranch horse. Sometimes, for them, enough is enough. Other times, older horses thrive in new environments and love the job of going on easy, slow trail walks in the woods.

Every step of the way, we engaged in CA to provide evaluation, care protocols, treatment and nutritional advice. I have been their customer since 1996, so know their senior vets well. Dr. has visited us multiple times to treat multiple horses since last September, as has Dr. Dr. , Dr. and Dr.

Because we are open to the public and take hundreds of adults and children on trail and pony rides each month, we must hold ourselves to a higher standard of care than most horse facilities. It's common knowledge among horse people that the general public can be easily impacted by a horse's behavior or physical condition. For example, most folks don't realize how hard it is to keep weight on horses age 20 and over, and that most are insulin reactive, and require special feeds. So, it's more normal, than not, that geriatric horses will be on the thin side. However, in our case, a thin horse on a trail ride would, perhaps, cause alarm from a guest from the general public. It is incumbent upon us to not allow that to happen, so all our horses are fed very specialized diets to insure they have all they need, specific to them individually, to keep their weight, muscle, energy,

brightness, steadiness and soundness.

Our herd includes two former half-Arabian National Show National Winners, a famous dam of a national winning mare, a national champion National Finals Rodeo star, two long-time rodeo horses, and several former working ranch horses. Both our ponies are former working ranch horses, and both can drag a roped goat and carry a rider doing rope tricks. This group was acquired because of their star-studded past, and deservedly so, we treat them like the famous horses they are.

The allegations being waged against us are patently false on their face. We are being accused on local social media of criminal horse neglect and abuse. Neglect means that we don't take action to assure a horse is being well-cared for. Abuse we are willfully trying to put a horse in harm's way. Both accusations are irresponsible, slanderous and just simply wrong.

Our consistent vet and feeding records debunk both claims as they vividly show frequent weekly and monthly veterinary visits, current shots, up-to-date purchases of medications and supplements and multiple requests for additional input on specific horses. Regarding ongoing care, attachments reveal that since November 2020, when we officially started our LLC and opened our checking account, we've spent in feed and basic supplies at , at and at on just supplements. That doesn't include multiple other vendors, but in 10.5 months, it

averages per month on feed, basic supplies and supplements for an average of 12 horses. That per month, per horse. That does not include the special shoes and shock-absorbing pads all our horses wear.

Physical evidence these allegations are false was first exposed last March when Animal Services paid us its first visit. We were reviewed and exonerated in just one visit. Officer Hart visited us twice last week – per my proactive request for an evaluation in a call to Officer Cohen. She again gave us a clean bill of health, and actually commended us verbally for taking such exemplary care of our older herd. Last Wednesday, we asked Dr. to evaluate our herd and update our files on each horse. He did, again commenting that each horse was in good body condition, and citing no evidence of any abuse, neglect or necessary changes to our well-established routines and practices. I believe his findings were released in full to Animal Services last Friday September 10.

Next month we are relocating to a new facility on property owned by the City of Buellton and adjacent to the popular River View Park. When I spoke before the City Council June 16 to discuss our application to move, I told the council members that being in full public view and operating a horse business in front of the public eye will invite scrutiny and judgement from the public. We run a highly transparent business, take exemplary care of all our horses, and always have, so I am not afraid of us being in the limelight. I now have a steady and highly-skilled staff, and they are all following the protocols and practices that

will keep us on the right track.

We will be building a brand new facility from the ground up, specifically designed to maintain the horses, ponies and a few exotic farm animals in a safe and confined place. We are adding an irrigated pasture, two large work arenas – one specifically for the pony rides – and spacious areas for guests to visit and enjoy their time with us.

Moving forward, I know we will undoubtedly cross paths again, as someone will find something to report. Our gates are always open for your visits and reviews, even when unannounced. I deeply appreciate the knowledge and integrity that your field officers have shown, thus far. I genuinely assume we will have a solid and productive working relationship in the years to come.

Yours Truly,

BOB SWEEENEY
Owner

Gonzales, Aubree

From: Bob Sweeney
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 5:00 PM
To: Gonzales, Aubree
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Attachments: Statement.rtf; Statement.rtf; Bob Sweeney Statement to SCBAS.rtf; Novenber 2020.pdf; .pdf; Nov 2020.pdf

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Dear Officer Gonzales:

Dr. from would like to add his statement, and I believe wants to do it verbally with you. I told him to contact you, and provided your email. I tried several times today to reach you via phone, and was unable due to no one answering and not having your direct line. I did leave one message that the person said they would forward to you via email. So, please try to reach Dr. directly his cell at That might provide a quicker connection.

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

Begin forwarded message:

From: Admin <
Subject: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 14, 2021 at 12:51:15 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org, Catherine.Hart@sbcphd.org

Dear Officers Gonzales and Hart:

Attached are the three requested Witness Statements from the owner and managers of Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides: **Bob Sweeney** / Owner, / Barn Manager and Assistant Barn Manager. Also attached are copies of bank statements showing supporting evidence referenced in my personal statement.

Thank you so very much for the thorough and meticulous examination you are conducting. I've now twice authorized to release all our records, up to and including Dr. examination last Wednesday, September 8. Hopefully, you have received them.

For your convenience, here is a proprietary link to a hidden page on our website with the compiled medical records of all current horses:

We are very much in need of your timely report to help stop the online assault against my staff, business and person. Please forward me your findings, and / or an overall statement clearing us of all allegations of animal abuse and neglect, which we have now proven beyond any reasonable objection.

Also, please send the final report to our new landlord, Scott Wolfe, Buellton City Manager. His email is

And, as we've repeatedly stated, you are welcome to visit our facility any time. We have nothing to hide, ever, and much good to share. We would love to have your staff as our guests at our grand re-opening at our new facility at River View Park in Buellton. We don't yet have a date set, but are hoping to be open by October 10. I will keep you posted!

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
Owner / General Manager

Gonzales, Aubree

From: Gonzales, Aubree
Sent: Sunday, September 19, 2021 4:00 PM
To: 'Bob Sweeney'
Subject: RE: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

Bob Sweeney,

My apologies for the delay. I have received all of your emails and attachments. Our investigation is ongoing and has not been closed. I deeply appreciate your cooperation throughout the process. You may request records regarding the case- once it's closed, they will be available to the public. Use the link below to submit a records request at any time.

https://santabarbaracountyca.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(et5doqyu2zeqor0jvkqpyywk))/SupportHome.aspx

You may provide Dr. with my email so he could reach me directly.

I attempted to call you back and the call went to voicemail. Your mailbox was full.

Best,

A Gonzales
Interim Supervising Field Officer
County of Santa Barbara Animal Services
548 West Foster Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 934 6119

Santa Barbara County
PUBLIC Health
DEPARTMENT

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From: Bob Sweeney
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 10:14 AM

To: Gonzales, Aubree <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

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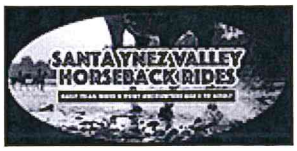
Dear Officer Gonzales:

Please call me.

Thank you.

Bob Sweeney
General Manager



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Date: September 14, 2021 at 5:00:00 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org

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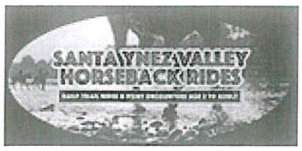
Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager



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From: Admin
Subject: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 14, 2021 at 12:51:15 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org, Catherine.Hart@sbcphd.org

Dear Officers Gonzales and Hart:

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Also, please send the final report to our new landlord, Scott Wolfe, Buellton City Manager. His email is

And, as we've repeatedly stated, you are welcome to visit our facility any time. We have nothing to hide, ever, and much good to share. We would love to have your staff as our guests at our grand re-opening at our new facility at River View Park in Buellton. We don't yet have a date set, but are hoping to be open by October 10. I will keep you posted!

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
Owner / General Manager

Gonzales, Aubree

From: Bob Sweeney <
Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2021 4:10 PM
To: Gonzales, Aubree; Hart, Catherine
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

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Dear Officer Gonzales:

Dr. , told me he's been attempting to reach you. Please contact him back either through the at so they can feasibly patch you through or call his cell at

Buellton City Manager Scott Wolfe is traveling this week, but he's also hoping to hear from you. His direct line is

As you know, my relationship with the City hangs in the balance of your findings and report.

Please update me at your next opportunity with the status of the investigation and if there is anything further I need to provide to clear our name.

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

Begin forwarded message:

From: Admin
Subject: Re: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 21, 2021 at 1:20:44 PM PDT
To: "Gonzales, Aubree" <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>

Hi Aubree,

Thank you for the update and sorry I missed your call on Sunday. I've forwarded your email to Dr. asking him to contact you as soon as he is able so we can get this put to rest.

I also wanted to let you know that we moved out of our facility at 1400 West Hwy 246 in Buellton on Saturday and Sunday to facilities at in Santa Ynez. We moved because our staff was being harassed with screaming visitors and threats that made them feel unsafe, uncomfortable and often ended in tears. The landowner, , also reported several threats to her family and their personal boarding business as well. Other disturbing things also happened. For example, during one of our final guest rides before we moved, a group of people on horseback (all former employees, including the woman who created the petition), met our staff and guests on the trail, while one hid in the bushes quietly filming our ride, for their "evidence" pile, I can only assume. Also, we learned yesterday that someone followed us from the Buellton facility to our new Santa Ynez facility to track where we moved, then contacted a staff member of a neighboring facility to encourage him to join their cause, sign the petition, etc... He blatantly refused. It has become ridiculous, and we are all frankly exhausted. So we are taking a sabbatical at this new location until we can move to River View Park, hopefully mid-October. I wanted you to know where we moved, and why. I've also let Officer Hart, Dr. , and Scott Wolfe (Buellton City Manager) know as well.

Lastly, I am not privy to why the investigation is ongoing. Perhaps it is as simple as waiting on the information from . But in the off-chance that any of my past employees have submitted statements alleging anything improper, I'd like to request the opportunity to rebut them. There are reasons that they are former employees, and this entire fiasco – that flies in the face of contradicting professional opinion – speaks for itself. So, please allow me the opportunity to respond if that is what is on the table. I put nothing past them at this point.

I'm very hopeful Dr. will connect with you quickly, and we can publish the report and lay this to rest.

Thanks again,
BOB

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

On Sep 19, 2021, at 3:59 PM, Gonzales, Aubree <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org> wrote:

Bob Sweeney,

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https://santabarbaracountyca.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(et5doqyu2zeqor0jvkqpyywk))/SupportHome.aspx

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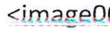
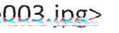
A Gonzales
Interim Supervising Field Officer
County of Santa Barbara Animal Services
548 West Foster Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 934 6119
 

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From: Bob Sweeney
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 10:14 AM
To: Gonzales, Aubree <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

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Dear Officer Gonzales:

Please call me.

Thank you.

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

<image004.png>

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From: Admin <
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 14, 2021 at 5:00:00 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org

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Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

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To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org, Catherine.Hart@sbcphd.org

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Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
Owner / General Manager

<image004.png>

Gonzales, Aubree

From: Bob Sweeney
Sent: Friday, October 1, 2021 2:28 PM
To: Gonzales, Aubree; Hart, Catherine; Koens, Christopher
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

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Dear Officers Gonzales, Hart and Koens:

Please update me on your report:

. Did you get Dr. statement?
. Are there other witness statements from past employees that I can review and rebut?
. Will your report be complete in time for next Wednesday's Buellton Planning Commission hearing?

My business hangs in the balance or your findings, though I have no expectation of any adverse facts. The City of Buellton is relying on your report, so it's absolutely essential that this is resolved before then.

Please advise.

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

Begin forwarded message:

From: Admin
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 23, 2021 at 4:09:53 PM PDT
To: "Gonzales, Aubree" <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>, chart@sbcphd.org
Cc:

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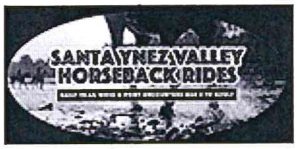

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General Manager

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Subject: Re: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
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To: "Gonzales, Aubree" <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>

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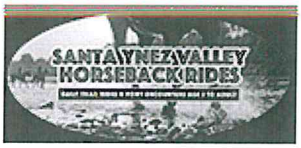
Thanks again,
BOB



Bob Sweeney
General Manager

On Sep 19, 2021, at 3:59 PM, Gonzales, Aubree <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org> wrote:

Bob Sweeney,

My apologies for the delay. I have received all of your emails and attachments. Our investigation is ongoing and has not been closed. I

deeply appreciate your cooperation throughout the process. You may request records regarding the case- once it's closed, they will be available to the public. Use the link below to submit a records request at any time.

https://santabarbaracountyca.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(et5doqyu2zeqor0jvkqpyywk))/SupportHome.aspx

You may provide Dr. with my email so he could reach me directly.

I attempted to call you back and the call went to voicemail. Your mailbox was full.

Best,

A Gonzales
Interim Supervising Field Officer
County of Santa Barbara Animal Services
548 West Foster Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 934 6119
<image001.png> <image002.png>
<image003.jpg>
CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain information protected from disclosure by applicable laws and regulations. If you are not an intended recipient, you may not review, use, copy, disclose or distribute this message or any of the information contained in this message to anyone. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of this message and any attachments. Unintended transmission shall not constitute waiver of any applicable legal protection afforded to this e-mail and any attached documents.

From: Bob Sweeney
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 10:14 AM
To: Gonzales, Aubree <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Officer Gonzales:

Please call me.

Thank you.

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

<image004.png>

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From: Admin
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 14, 2021 at 5:00:00 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org

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Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

<image004.png>

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From: Admin
<

Subject: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 14, 2021 at 12:51:15 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org, Catherine.Hart@sbcphd.org

Dear Officers Gonzales and Hart:

Attached are the three requested Witness Statements from the owner and managers of Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides: **Bob Sweeney** / Owner, / Barn Manager and Assistant Barn Manager. Also attached are copies of bank statements showing supporting evidence referenced in my personal statement.

Thank you so very much for the thorough and meticulous examination you are conducting. I've now twice authorized to release all our records, up to and including Dr.

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Also, please send the final report to our new landlord, Scott Wolfe, Buellton City Manager. His email is

And, as we've repeatedly stated, you are welcome to visit our facility any time. We have nothing to hide, ever, and much good to share. We would love to have your staff as our guests at our grand re-opening at our new facility at River View Park in Buellton. We don't yet have a date set, but are hoping to be open by

October 10. I will keep you posted!

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
Owner / General Manager

<image004.png>

Gonzales, Aubree

From:
Sent: Tuesday, October 5, 2021 3:50 PM
To: Gonzales, Aubree
Subject: Fwd: Records for "Fortune and Fame"
Attachments: Fortune and Fame Sweeney .pdf

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Officer Gonzales:

Dr. statement just sent to you by his staff is in error. His new remarks today reference the previous recommendation by Dr. , and adds that Fame can be used for riding until her pregnancy leave. However, his secretary didn't include these remarks in the summary report she sent you. I'm attaching the revised remarks and asked her to add them to the version she sent you. You should receive that shortly.

Also, I expect Dr. will send his remarks to me this evening and I will forward to you upon receipt.

Thank you for making the effort to visit us today. I really appreciate your effort and desire to be thorough. It was also nice meeting you.

Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
General Manager

Begin forwarded message:

From:
Subject: Records for "Fortune and Fame"
Date: October 5, 2021 at 3:34:10 PM PDT
To: "Gonzales, Aubree" <Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org>
Cc:

Please see attached.

--

Gonzales, Aubree

From: Bob Sweeney
Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 1:21 PM
To: Gonzales, Aubree
Subject: Re: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Aubree,

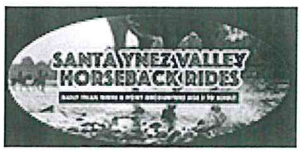
Thank you for the update and sorry I missed your call on Sunday. I've forwarded your email to Dr. ; asking him to contact you as soon as he is able so we can get this put to rest.

I also wanted to let you know that we moved out of our facility at 1400 West Hwy 246 in Buellton on Saturday and Sunday to facilities at in Santa Ynez. We moved because our staff was being harassed with screaming visitors and threats that made them feel unsafe, uncomfortable and often ended in tears. The landowner, , also reported several threats to her family and their personal boarding business as well. Other disturbing things also happened. For example, during one of our final guest rides before we moved, a group of people on horseback (all former employees, including the woman who created the petition), met our staff and guests on the trail, while one hid in the bushes quietly filming our ride, for their "evidence" pile, I can only assume. Also, we learned yesterday that someone followed us from the Buellton facility to our new Santa Ynez facility to track where we moved, then contacted a staff member of a neighboring facility to encourage him to join their cause, sign the petition, etc... He blatantly refused. It has become ridiculous, and we are all frankly exhausted. So we are taking a sabbatical at this new location until we can move to River View Park, hopefully mid-October. I wanted you to know where we moved, and why. I've also let Officer Hart, Dr. and Scott Wolfe (Buellton City Manager) know as well.

Lastly, I am not privy to why the investigation is ongoing. Perhaps it is as simple as waiting on the information from . But in the off-chance that any of my past employees have submitted statements alleging anything improper, I'd like to request the opportunity to rebut them. There are reasons that they are former employees, and this entire fiasco – that flies in the face of contradicting professional opinion – speaks for itself. So, please allow me the opportunity to respond if that is what is on the table. I put nothing past them at this point.

I'm very hopeful Dr. will connect with you quickly, and we can publish the report and lay this to rest.

Thanks again,
BOB



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<image004.png>

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Subject: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Date: September 14, 2021 at 12:51:15 PM PDT
To: Aubree.Gonzales@sbcphd.org, Catherine.Hart@sbcphd.org

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Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
Owner / General Manager

<image004.png>

WELLS FARGO

SYV RIDES
Account

Routing Numbers

Available balance

Activity Summary

Ending collected balance as of 09/10/21	
Current posted balance	
Pending withdrawals/debits	
Pending deposits/credits	$0.00
Available balance	

Monthly Service Fee Summary

Routing numbers

Activity

The Available Balance shown above reflects the most up-to-date information available on your account. The balances shown below next to the last transaction of each day do not reflect any pending withdrawals or holds on deposited funds that may have been outstanding on your account when the transaction posted. If you had insufficient available funds when the transaction posted to your account, fees may have been assessed.

First
Previous
Next

Date	Description	Deposits/Credits	Withdrawals/Debits	Ending Daily Balance

Pending Transactions

No pending transactions meet your search criteria. Please try again.

Posted Transactions

09/09/21

09/07/21

08/31/21

08/30/21

08/27/21

08/23/21

08/23/21

Totals

Date	Description	Deposits/Credits	Withdrawals/Debits	Ending Daily Balance
08/16/21				
08/16/21				
08/11/21				
08/10/21				
08/10/21				
08/06/21				
08/03/21				
07/27/21				
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07/26/21				
07/20/21				
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07/09/21				
07/07/21				
07/02/21				
06/30/21				
06/28/21				
06/28/21				
06/28/21				
06/21/21				

Totals

Date	Description	Deposits/Credits	Withdrawals/Debits	Ending Daily
06/16/21				
06/15/21				
06/11/21				
06/07/21				
06/07/21				
06/02/21				
06/01/21				
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03/26/21				
03/22/21				

Totals

Date	Description	Deposits/Credits	Withdrawals/Debits	Ending Daily
03/15/21				
03/08/21				
03/05/21				
03/01/21				
02/23/21				
02/17/21				
02/17/21				
02/16/21				
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12/30/20				
12/23/20				
12/01/20				
11/24/20				
11/17/20				
Totals				

Date	Description	Deposits/Credits	Withdrawals/Debits	Ending Daily Balance
11/16/20				
11/09/20				
Totals				

Back to top

First
Previous
Next

*Account

Deposit proc

Equal Hou

Bixby, Julia

From: Bob Sweeney <
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 5:00 PM
To: Gonzales, Aubree
Subject: Fwd: Witness Statements RE Santa Ynez Valley Horseback Rides
Attachments: Statement.rtf; Statement.rtf; Bob Sweeney Statement to SCBAS.rtf; :ovenber 2020.pdf; pdf; Nov 2020.pdf

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General Manager

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Kind Regards,

Bob Sweeney
Owner / General Manager

Activity# 21-076445
9/13/2021

To whom it may concern,

My name is , I have been a Santa Ynez Valley resident my whole life , as well as being and active participant in the local and regional the horse community. My family owned Transportation Co. (the original Solvang company) up until the day he passed in 2000.

We did everything from horse drawn carriages in Solvang, hay wagons for family barbecues and also elegant weddings all over Santa Barbara and Ventura County, including Elizabeth Taylor's wedding at Neverland Ranch. I have a lot of experience in this side of the horse show industry, particularly with the public service element. It has always been very important to our family and business that are horses are happy and healthy, so our customers are happy, as well.

I first started working as barn manager for Bob Sweeney in March 2021, he was looking for a barn manager and offered me the position, if I wanted it. I graciously accepted in March

2021.

At that time he had a 30 year old and 3 other teenagers working there. It was all wonderful in the beginning, but as soon as the 'new' wore off the employees were just not following procedures correctly and not following directions, which led to some employee's leaving. Apparently, this had already happened in the past, as well, with employees leaving the company after not going along with procedures and protocals.

A little after I took the job, about a month, we started hearing from a previous employee and her mother in law about how Biscuit was in pain and they were going to call Animal Control. All the while, they were being fed inaccurate and inappropriate information from the land owners daughter, to raise issues about Biscuit. By the way, the daughter is not a knowledgable horse person. Their family owned a grade horse in her childhood, and to my knowledge, that was the extent of it.

This led to the group of them having a vet come out in the middle of the night, on a Sunday, to do an exam on Biscuit. They did this without permission or contacting Bob Sweeney (Biscuit's owner), or me, the barn manager. The vet essentially gave the same review as our vet had done about two weeks previously. The very next day, someone from their group called Animal Control to do a wellness check on Biscuit. We offered the officer visiting the facility to take pictures and look

over our feed/med room, corrals etc... which was completed and without incident; no citations, critique or horse seizure. I believe this is documented in your records from the March/April 2021 inspection your office conducted.

Since then, we have kept up with Biscuit's regimen per Dr. from and have seen a huge improvement with Biscuit's leg swelling and the freedom of movement he has regained. May 23, Dr. gave us written permission to start riding and using Biscuit lightly. This return to work has also helped him mentally, so instead of being left behind and alone by the herd, he now finally gets to be included in the herd on occasional rides. You can tell he is much healthier and happier.

These patently false allegations of horse abuse and neglect, to me, are just absurd. First off, we keep meticulous, organized files for each one of our horses for vet visits, Farrier visits, chiropractic appointments, de-wormings, diet & nutrition... the list goes on and on. I work with these horses every single day, from sun up to sundown, and I know the work that I put in. I am an honest person with Integrity, which is why Bob hired me.

I really believe what this company is doing is a wonderful thing, not only for our community/ customers to go on a fun, beautiful relaxing trail ride, but for the horses. This is not just a trail riding business; I believe it to be a horse rehabilitation program.

Most of the horses we have came to us in bad shape. Bob gives me free rein to do whatever it takes to get these ex-show or rodeo horses back in tip top condition and get them on the trail again, from special shoes to vet appointments to special grains. He is doing a really great job with these older horses.

These horses make so many people so happy and it just warms our hearts to share these amazing creatures with so many, especially children. We have an amazing group of ladies that work here now that are responsible and trustworthy and really put the horses first.
I don't know how this facility was run before I worked here, but since March I have put all of my knowledge and experience to work and together with Bob's knowledge and experience, we have a solid business where the community can come and safely learn about horses and have everlasting family memories.

We had a great talk with the Officer Hart on her last visit. She commended us for taking such good care of our elderly herd and had some great ideas to share with us, as well.

We really love what we do here at SYV Horseback Rides and enjoy teaching others about horses and horseback riding, as well. Please feel free to stop by, check in and say hello, anytime in the future. We really do appreciate the kindness and training of your team. Thank you for taking the time to investigate and clear the record of the false and terrible

allegations made against us.

Sincerely,

Barn Manager

September 13, 2021

To: SBC Animal Services

Attn: Aubree Gonzales

RE: Activity # 21-076445

Witness: Anim
al Owner

Bob
Sweeney/SYV Horseback Rides

To Whom It May Concern:

I started working for SYV Horseback Rides in March 2021. From the first day of employment, I have only witnessed extraordinary care to the horses by the staff of SYV Horseback Rides. From feeding to doctoring, these horses are blessed to be in the care of this facility. It saddens me that anyone would consider any of the horses abused, misused, or neglected. I see, firsthand, the care these horses are given. The facility isn't fancy, but these horses are loved, and their best interest is always put first. In my opinion, these horses are being given a second chance after their retirement. The work they do, in general, is light. They are being physically exercised for their optimal physical benefit. Their diets are individually met per their health requirements. I honestly feel that any horse being cared for by SYV Horseback Rides and its staff are of the luckiest of herds.

The specific horses in question: Biscuit, Gandalf, and Fame are in great condition.

Biscuit: When I started, in March, Biscuit was in the beginning stages of his rehabilitation. Per the vet's guidance and recommendation, he was given a few weeks without work. When light work resumed, one to two rides per week, his legs were iced after every ride. After, we would massage his legs with his medicated ointment and wrapped them. This practice has continued after each ride. The swelling in his legs has significantly decreased and he looks like a different horse. He does not show any signs of discomfort or pain. He is very happy and eager to go on any trail ride. I am so proud of his turnaround. He is being given the best opportunity for a happy and healthy future.

Gandalf: Gandalf is an older horse, such as the rest of the herd. His dietary needs have changed to maintain his weight. Through the guidance of the vet, we have added a senior feed. We have put him on softened alfalfa pellets and keep him on a free feed. He is a picky eater. What Gandalf wants; Gandalf gets! His weight has increased.

Fame: I do not know of the allegations pertaining to Fame. She was lame for a bit and recovered. Like most older horses, they have a form of arthritis. She is given specific supplements, like the rest of the herd, and has made a fantastic recovery. She is happy, healthy, and feels great. She is an absolute pleasure to ride on the trail.

Without any doubt, I would leave my horse in the care of SYV Horseback Rides. I'm proud of the care and integrity shown by Bob Sweeney, the staff, and myself. The care we give to the horses is amazing. We love our herd. We love and care for them like they are our own. Not having one of them would be a great loss and felt by us all. Due to this controversy, one of our horses was removed from us by its owner. She had a third party transport company pick him up sight unseen. He was doing great and was an integral part of our program. It's a shame, and so unnecessary. We were all very sad and felt it as a great loss because we know what we do is right, honest, and above all, compassionate.

Cordially,

Assistant Barn Manager, SYV Horseback Rides