



**2008**  
**Year In Review**

# Statistics

As of December 31, 2008					As of December 31, 2007					As of December 31, 2006							
39	Recognized Centers				33	Recognized Centers				8	Recognized Centers						
22	Regions with Centers				21	Regions with Centers				6	Regions with Centers						
33	Centers with Members				25	Centers with Members				6	Centers with Members						
554	Members				376	Total Members				160	Members						
259	New Members									141	New Members						
Ratings					Ratings					Ratings							
232	UR	94	D1	24	C1	193	UR	64	D1	7	C1	80	UR	41	D1	1	C1
		120	D2	6	C2			74	D2	3	C2			25	D2	2	C2
		75	D3	2	C3			32	D3	3	C3			10	D3	1	C3

Average Size of a Center Membership: 16

Average Age of the Center Members: 12.5

## What's New in the Center Program?

**RCA** – Regional Center Administrator, works under the supervision of the Area Coordinator and works as a liaison between the RS, AC, and the centers. The RCA works to foster the growth of the Pony Club program in the region through the formation of new centers and the development of established centers. RCAs are recommended by the RS to the National Riding Center Coordinator and confirmed by the VPRA.

**Payments** – Due to IRS implementations regarding the co-mingling of funds (i.e., running any money due to Pony Club through another business, the center), USPC, whether the National Office, its regions or clubs, may not accept facility checks for payment of any membership dues or activity/entry fees. Individual personal checks must be sent. *EXCEPTION: If the facility is going to pay for the due or the fee itself and not receive payment from another individual or entity for that due or fee. In which case, the facility should attach a signed note indicating that they will not be receiving payment for that due or fee.*

**Marketing** – 2009 finds USPC entering the fourth year of a five year trial period for the Riding Center Program. There are plans to begin serious marketing of the program and of Pony Club, through speaking engagements, ad placements, story submissions to horse industry publications, press releases, and direct solicitations.

Do you know of a facility with an established riding lesson program that would be suitable as a Pony Club Riding Center? Have them check out the Web site under "Join" and then on the drop down "Riding Center Program" for information on the program, or they may contact the Riding Center Liaison, Aileen Gordon, at [aileen@ponyclub.org](mailto:aileen@ponyclub.org) or 859/254-7669, ext. 231.

# Riding Center Myths

**MYTH:** *There would be mass transfers of current Pony Club members to the Riding Centers.*

**FACT:** The Riding Centers have brought in new members to USPC. About 95% of the members in the centers are new members to Pony Club.

**FACT:** While there have been some transfers of members in a club to a center, in 2007 we saw the first members in centers transferring to clubs, and in 2008 we saw transfers from one center to another.

**MYTH:** *Members in a Riding Center are not full Pony Club members.*

**FACT:** A Pony Club member is a Pony Club member. Whether they join through a club or a center, Pony Club members all have the same opportunities to rate, rally, participate in regional and national activities and events, qualify for international exchanges, scholarships, contests, and are a part of the Pony Club family!



**FACT:** By allowing members through a Riding Center to be full-fledged members of USPC, we are not only teaching them riding, horsemanship and safety skills, but we are also developing in them responsibility, moral judgment, leadership and self-confidence – everything we want for the leaders of tomorrow, whether they stay in the horse industry or not.

**MYTH:** *Members in a Riding Center would not want to participate in Regional Activities.*

**FACT:** Overall, members and leaders in the centers see the benefits of participating in regional events and desire to be involved in the activities and want to support the region.

**FACT:** Center Administrators are being asked to take leadership roles within their region. While CAs may not be an officer of the region, regions are drawing upon the knowledge, experience, and resources that a center may have to offer.



**MYTH:** *With an average membership of sixteen members, centers will be able to provide an influx of parent volunteers to the region.*

**FACT:** Unlike the structure and foundation of a club, a center is not based on the involvement and commitment of the parents to provide the Pony Club program. A center is based on the desire and drive of a facility's owner and staff to provide the Pony Club program.

**FACT:** The Pony Club program was designed to be administered by multiple people. While some centers do not have parents in positions to be able to volunteer their time, or the facility is not organized in a manner to be conducive to parent involvement, many do have a small core group of parents supporting the facility in administrating the Pony Club program. Centers have utilized parents in many ways, including in leadership roles of Center Administrator, Membership Coordinator, Rating Coordinator, and Instruction Coordinator.

# Mission Accomplished

*The mission of the United States Pony Clubs is to provide a program for youth that **teaches riding, mounted sports, and the care of horses and ponies**, thereby developing responsibility, moral judgment, leadership and self-confidence.*



Hybid Farm Pony Club Riding Center members at their C-2 testing.



## **Hybid Farm Pony Club Riding Center**

*Submitted by Meg Howes, CA*

Hybid Farm Pony Club Riding Center has had an incredible year! We started 2008 armed with strategies for becoming more organized and information to assist our members. Our first order of business was to schedule a mandatory parent/member meeting to energize the entire crew for a year of successful rallies, clinics, mounted and unmounted lessons, and several center ratings.

Through a lot of hard work from our riders and instructors, we are so pleased to announce that three of Hybid's members – Britt Hallet, Kylie Harrigan and Coleman McConnon – achieved their C-2 rating. Our very first Upper Level members! After celebrating their success, we realized that we now have many questions as to which direction our program will go. As a lesson barn, do we have horses who could tackle future Upper Level work? Is it Hybid Farm's responsibility to provide a horse with this talent or, at this point, do we turn it over to the Pony Club member's family to make the commitment of providing or leasing a horse for their child? Would our candidates be able to afford the lessons, training and board of a horse in order to compete and progress at the Upper Levels? How do we structure *that* fee? (An on-going conversation that Riding Centers discuss regularly on the Yahoo CADigest Group!) So many things to work out.....

We are once again in the all too familiar situation of having to navigate new territory. But now we feel confident that we'll be able to find solutions. We have learned who our resources are (we now know what a RIC is!). We have become indebted to long-standing members who have held our hand along this journey. We also have a hot-line to the National Office. With all these guides we aren't as scared as we used to be - we know we have the wisdom and support of so many.



At the start of the 2009 year, our three C-2s will be attending regional clinics for Upper Level candidates and absorbing all the Pony Club education and resources that they can. In turn, they will be teaching horsemanship to our D's and sharing with them the great things to come. We have yet to resolve any of our Upper Level dilemmas regarding horse competency or our member's financial commitment. But, all in due time.....

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## ***Sandia Creek Ranch Pony Club Riding Center***

*Submitted by Tauni Beckmann, CA*

What do you do when you've fallen in love with the untamed horse that's been running in the back pasture for eight years that your father bought at auction "because he was pretty" and he couldn't stand to see him go to slaughter? Well, if you're Kiersti Wylie full of dreams and with no fear, you form a relationship with that horse and teach him to love cross-country.

At age ten, Kiersti befriended Trevor, a green broke eleven-year old grey Thoroughbred, and began to ride him. Soon enough, she wanted to take him in a little combined test. The pair had a successful ride. Throughout the years, Kiersti and Trevor continued to progress through beginner novice, novice, and training level.

Now at 16, Kiersti had her heart set on riding Trevor in her first "½ star" (training level 3-day event) at Galway in Temecula, CA. In search of more information about how to be competitive

in the different phases Kiersti asked a lot of questions. People told her that she would need a team in the 10-minute box. Kiersti, a C-3 Pony Club member of Sandia Creek Ranch Pony Club Riding Center, replied, "Oh good, I'll have the PC'ers help me." To which she was quickly corrected, "OH NO, you can't have PC'ers help you with this. This is far more serious than PC stuff."



Kiersti was convinced that using Pony Club members in her team was truly the way to go for Trevor's sake. Trevor is incredibly uncomfortable being around adults and people he doesn't know. She knew Trevor would accept the Pony Club members. Kiersti carefully selected 3 kids from her Riding Center that could help her and Trevor – Rachel, age 9, Kristina, age 15, and Elizabeth, age 11.

Come the weekend of the event, Kiersti and Trevor put in their best Dressage test ever on Friday. On Saturday, Roads and Tracks was first. Not only was this Kiersti and Trevor's first time, it was also the first time for her team of Pony Club members, not really knowing what they were getting themselves into but determined to not let Kiersti down! With buckets and supplies in hand, they rushed over to set up in the 10-minute box. Kiersti headed out on course, and her PC team waited in the 10-minute box and absorbed everything they were seeing from the other riders.

As soon as Kiersti entered the 10-minute box all of her team was there to help, knowing that Trevor was going to be climbing out of his skin as the vets quickly approached. Sure enough, Kiersti crossed through the flags, quickly dismounted, and the swarm of vets rushed Trevor. The kids tried to speak up and let the vets know Trevor would be uncomfortable with this. They wouldn't hear it and proceeded to try to take the vital signs. As Trevor almost left town, Kiersti quickly requested that the kids hold Trevor and she be allowed to administer the thermometer. Saying that they've never seen a horse's heart rate increase in the 10-minute box like this, the vets agreed and stepped back. Trevor settled right down and his heart rate dropped immediately.



As soon as he was cleared, the team proceeded with the cool down process. As they sponged, sweat scraped, cooled down, and settled Trevor, Kiersti quickly reviewed her cross-country

course making a note of her times. One of the team members jogged Trevor out for the inspection, and then it was time to hop back on and run cross-country. The pair breezed through the course beautifully. Finishing clean and within the optimum time, they returned to the 10-minute box. The vets now well aware that it was okay to depend on this Pony Club Team, allowed them to report the horses vital signs with the vet's supervision. They were stunned at how well this Pony Club Team worked together. Time and time again, various people shared how incredible it is to see a bunch of kids perform all the responsibilities and tasks at hand without ANY adult assistance!



Now you are probably wondering how the weekend ended up for Kiersti and Trevor... Sunday they entered the stadium warm-up, and again Trevor began to get nervous. But when the ring steward announced, "Kiersti on deck," they headed over to the gate. The pair entered the ring and saluted, the buzzer sounded and they began their course. The pair put in a beautiful stadium round, leaving all the rails up and jumping around like they've done it a hundred times! Trevor and Kiersti ended up finishing on their dressage score bringing home 10<sup>th</sup> place out of the 34 in their division! Competing against trainers in their very first "½ star." It was a fantastic experience! The pair was in fabulous shape, ready for the next ½ star competition, and came away saying "our Pony Club Team ROCKS!"

***From Sharon Turner, Rating Examiner, following Misty Brae Farm Pony Club Riding Center's first rating:***

*"...let me add that Misty Brae is doing a really wonderful job! Both the CA and the barn owner are former Pony Club members and it is clear that the barn is well run, the horses are well cared for, appropriate choices for horse/rider combinations are being made and both the riding and HM instruction is excellent!*

*Above all I must say that the camaraderie amongst the kids is as strong as or stronger than I've ever seen. I think the Riding Center Program offers the interesting feature of members being with each other and sharing with one another on an extremely regular basis. It fosters not only a friendship group that looks out for each other, but that also looks out for their mutually shared mounts (a wonderful bonding experience I think for many Pony Clubs and Pony Club Members). In addition they have a lot of unique pluses. One presented itself the second rating day when a planned mount came down with an abscess. The rider, even though only rated a D-2, was able to switch to another horse she was familiar with (although hadn't ridden in a little while) and was able to adjust through a few nerves to show a lovely riding presentation."*