

Hello Cutter Friends –

Can you believe it is 2016?!?!? I hope that you all had a great holiday season and that this New Year has started off well for you and yours!! Let me tell you a little about what has been going on here at OCHA. It's a little lengthy but we have been BUSY!!!

First and foremost you should know that you have an amazing group of people working on your behalf. The Board of Directors and myself have been listening to you, the members, and we have begun what I am calling a "Revitalizing Project". We have been working very hard and have come up with some great ideas that will address many of your concerns and that will bring you a new Norton Ranch experience this year. Here are some points of interest.....

- 1) As many of you may have heard, we will be taking down the existing show pen and installing a new Noble Panel arena in its place. This project was made possible by the donations of some members of OCHA and COCHA and a few local businesses. We will be adding a list of these donors to the OCHA home page. When you have a minute, look through those names and when you come upon these individuals, be sure to thank them for their generosity!! Please also thank the great people at Noble Panels. They have been outstanding to work with!!
- 2) In addition to the new walls of the show pen, you will also find new footing. Tom Norton has hired Randy Fenimore of Arena Technologies. He will be taking out all of the existing material, re leveling the base and then adding back a mix of different sands. With Randy's expertise, it is sure to be a cutting horses dream.
- 3) The board of OCHA saw a definite need to pick up what was previously the TKC Aged Event. A Derby and Classic/Challenge have been added into the weekend schedule at each of our March, April and August shows. There will be \$1000 added in the open division and \$500 added in the non pro of each class and they will be offered twice at each event. The March show flyer is attached below.
- 4) We have also added three very important and much needed committees this year.
 1. Linda Bailey and Sharon Tullis are heading up the area of hospitality! They have lots of great ideas in the works, not the least of which are creating a lounge area and holding a chili cook off. I am certain that there will be tons of fun to be had by all with these two in charge!
 2. Fiina Jolley will be the voice at the director's table for all of our non pro and amateur members. She is always such a great listener so if you have any ideas, questions, or concerns, be sure to look her up. You can usually find her by the in gate!!
 3. Emily Clark will be representing the youth. She has been reaching out to the NCHA and other organizations to bring our kids as much opportunity for scholarship money as she can. Our new schedule will be showcasing the youth, as well as the \$2000 limited rider, in the middle of the day each weekend and Emily also has some great things brewing to make this a really exciting time for them. If you have ideas or would like to help her out, I know she would welcome any input.
 4. Russ Elrod and myself have also been working with representatives of other affiliates in Region 1 in regards to the Northwest Regional Series (NRS). We are working hard to continue to grow the concept in a manner that benefits all participating organizations as well as their members. The Regional board just completed setting the rules and regulations which will soon be available to view on our website. After much discussion, I believe that the completed version is quite fair for everyone involved. That having been said, we did vote to increase the NRS approval fee at each regional show from \$5 to \$8. While we deliberated about making such a move, we did need to be honest about the situation. The purse alone for the Shootout is currently \$10,000. In addition, the NRS bears the cost to host their finals (arena, judge, etc.). Last year the \$5 fees collected and the kick in required of each affiliate did not quite cover all of the expenses and the affiliates were asked for a little more. We believe that this increase will be enough to cover the shortages that we saw last year. I can sympathize with those of you who wish not to pay such a fee. However, I have concluded that this particular is payed to support an achievement which anyone of us here in the NW could easily strive for. It is definitely within our reach. And if not with in yours personally, certainly you have a friends whom you know will run for this award. I should think that supporting our fellow members will go a long way toward strengthening the camaraderie of our association. AND, just as a reminder, we all pay a \$2 National Championship fee EACH AND EVERY run. Over the course of a show season, this is substantially more than what we will pay for this NRS increase.

This year's board is made up of a great group of individuals and I am very happy to be working with them. They are all very receptive and the concerns of the membership are of utmost importance. All of us would welcome any ideas that you have that might help us achieve our most important goal, namely, to bring you the best weekend cutting experience possible. We are here for you so please feel free to give us a call with your suggestions!!

I look forward to seeing you next month in Madras!!

Until then, be safe!!

Sarah