

April 22, 2011

**From the desk of:**

**Candi Bothum**

Gaming & Cows are here to stay  
OHSET State Chair, 2<sup>nd</sup> year

To the Athletes, Coaches, Judges, Volunteers, and Families of OHSET,

As the OHSET State Chair I am about to complete my 2<sup>nd</sup> year in office. While it's been a bit of a wild ride, I look back and am proud of many things we've accomplished and several that we continue to strive toward. It's important that you understand the accomplishments are ours, the board; 2 adults and 1 athlete from every district is the voting body and they represent all of you. While Karissa and I have been asked to lead the way, neither of us, nor any of our committee chairs have a vote. However, we all have, as do the board members, enormous responsibility. That responsibility is to support the mission of OHSET. We are to provide a safe environment, skilled, capable and competent coaching, leadership, and officials. We must provide a "fair, positive and educational format." And, we are to provide recognition for the accomplishments of high school equestrian athletes in our venue.

With that as our directive, we have strived to facilitate OHSET in a transparent and ethical manner. We've worked hard to enforce rules or eliminate them, to clarify what can be easily misunderstood, and to help teams work through difficult situations. This board has worked an enormous number of volunteer hours all to benefit athletes in this program. This doesn't mean we're perfect, we continue to find this situation or that rule that needs "cleaning up" so everything we do can be clear to all and so what we do in our districts will be similar to operations in all districts. Having a strong State Board is critical to the success of this organization. I believe our board is diverse, competent, and respectful of each other. We all come from different places, and we don't always agree, but we respect the process and move on if things "don't go our way." The process is a good one.

With that said, I continue to hear the following usually with much more colorful language, "that Candi is just a performance person, she knows nothing about anything else and she is working hard to get rid of gaming and cows so OHSET can just be performance." Until now, I've laughed it off as a misinformed comment, those who are speaking it truly have no clue about me or where I come from. However, the comments continue and they are beginning to significantly affect our overall organization and we have some very important work to do, so it's chatter that just doesn't need to happen.

First, nothing could be farther from the truth. I love the diversity of this organization and in fact, believe it to be part of the back bone of what we do; it certainly is a big part of the uniqueness our organization offers. If I have anything to say about it, cows and gaming are here to stay. I'm not a performance person, or a gaming person, or even a cattle person, I'm a "youth" person. I believe youth, their education, and the life skills and character we can teach them, will sustain us through the future. It's literally my life's work and it will continue, with or without OHSET. Having horses involved is simply a plus.

I believe this chatter has come from my support of our organization standing alone. What I mean by this is OHSET operating by its own rules, with our own interpretations and our participants determining rules and interpretations through our process and NOT depending on other organizations, who don't have our unique challenges, to make those decisions for us. We are an amazing organization! It's time we relied on our own excellence. What does this mean to gaming and cows? It means accepting rules and clarifications of our own and not looking to WHO or USTPA to interpret our situation. I suspect we'll use various organizations, including

WHO, AQHA, USTPA and others as templates to begin our own drafted rules. Then when challenges arise, OHSET judges will interpret, clarify, and work together to improve our rules so that they are inclusive and clear as possible.

I personally have no animosity toward WHO, OHA, or any other equine organization. They each serve their own purpose and are excellent in their own venue. I simply believe we are equally excellent and we owe it to ourselves to utilize that excellence to target our own unique needs.

If you have questions about our organization or where it might be heading, please don't hesitate to contact me on my cell phone: 541-419-6350, by email: [cbothum@ohset.com](mailto:cbothum@ohset.com), or stop in and we'll visit at the state meet. Given the lack of understanding of our direction by a loud few, I hope you will ask me if you have questions or share your thoughts and visions. This is NOT my organization, it belongs to the athletes and volunteers of OHSET, should they continue to have me, I will work diligently to lead it according to the mission the founders so carefully generated.

Respectfully,



Candi Bothum  
State Chair