

Woernel Koi Rescue

October 9 saw the culmination of three months of planning for the closing down of a member's pond in Hesperia. When *Ray Woernel* died early this year, his wife tried to keep his pond going, but by July *Dolores* had asked the club to rescue the fish, hopefully find them homes, and drain the pond. *Ed Kushner* brought the request to the Board and coordinated the team effort.

In August, *Ed* and *Linda Kushner*, *Mark Krakower* and *Gene Maingot* drove out to visit *Dolores* to evaluate the situation. It was decided a rescue was doable as long as there were quarantine tanks available to hold the koi until the next IKS suction, set for May.



Anticipating the auction and this rescue, IKS purchased two 4000-gallon above-ground pools, and *Ed* and *Tom Ross* set them up in their yards. A truck, boxes and bags were procured, a holding tank, pumps and other equipment was gathered, and the date was set to return to Hesperia. The eight-man rescue team consisted of *Ed Kushner*, *Gene Maingot*, *Bob Henry*, *Dennis Lynaugh*, *Tom Wright*, *Orville Hanson*, *Mark Krakower* and *Tom Ross* [L to R below], plus *Sandy Hanson* as photographer.



The first order of business was to cart in the necessary equipment, set up pumps for draining the pond, and fill a holding tank.

The pond was vinyl-lined and had a large flat shelf about 3'-4' deep that dropped off into a deep basin 5'-6' deep. The koi would end up gathering in the basin in increasingly mucky water as the pond was drained.



As the top shelf was exposed, accumulated algae was brushed from the walls so the guys could move more safely in the pond to net the koi and pass them up and out to the waiting tank. Once identified, inspected and recorded, the fish were bagged and boxed with oxygen; they got a long rest in the shade while the rest of the work continued. At day's end they would be transported back to Riverside and the Q-ponds.

Once the fish were out, the last bit of water and muck were removed, leaving a clean dry area with no attraction for mosquitoes. All the filters needed to be back-flushed, cleaned out and disconnected; the electrical was shut down. Lastly, the equipment was loaded on the truck.

Dolores bravely watched as the team undid years of her husband's hobby, but with the pond gone, she would be able to list the property for sale. She has generously donated all of his koi, equipment, food and supplies to the club, including a microscope and two new pumps. She was a gracious hostess as the guys worked, and she even provided a wonderful lunch for everyone.



In the end, the guys reported that 59 koi were removed and relocated to the waiting quarantine pools. The Board had voted to subsidize the care and feeding of the koi housed at the *Kushner's* and the *Ross's* until the auction — it seemed a reasonable expense for maintaining auctionable stock for so long a time — and the equipment will be stored until then. We thank *Dolores* for allowing us to help her through this painful period.



Over the last month IKS has completed two large rescues and now has about 80 Koi in 3 rescue tanks. Our club auction will be in about 7 months and the time prior to the auction always goes quickly. We are looking for club members who are willing to have us set up club-owned QT tanks and filtration prior to the auction; this may a good time to see how having a quarantine set-up in your side-yard works out. So, give *Ed Kushner* a call (phone number on page 2) if you are willing to help.

~Peggy Milfeld, Assistant Editor