



The Feedbag

February 2020

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Presidents Letter:

Howdy, Backcountry Horsemen of Missoula. I am honored once again to serve as your President. I intend to continue and enhance the long-established traditions of this Chapter, the second oldest chapter in the country. I bring to you my 35 plus years involvement in this great organization. We have an awesome Board of Directors helping me also.

I invite you to our annual Membership Roundup on Saturday, bring a dish, a friend, an auction item if you wish, and be ready for a great time. Look for more details in this newsletter. Also check out our calendars, and all of the events planned for this year.

We are excited to have launched the new Mentoring Committee, led by Kirsten Pabst. Our goal is to match new and less experienced members with more experienced teachers to build relationships, learn new things and help facilitate attending our events. So, anyone interested please contact me or your favorite Board member.

Remember, everyone is welcome to attend Board meetings, and get involved. I am looking forward to getting out there with you.

Happy Trails an "Tap er Light".

Dave Schilz



BCH of Missoula Officers, Board and Committees

Officers

Dave Schilz	President	406-425-1113
Ken Brown	Vice President	406-207-6067
Kirsten Pabst	Secretary	406-396-7050
Deb Monson	Treasurer	406-244-0039
Dan Harper	Past President	406-258-6467

Board of Directors

One year remaining:

Judy Allen, Lee Crawford, Chuck Erickson

Two year term:

Mike Chandler, Mike Moore, Gary Salisbury

State Directors

Richard Tamcke (Senior Director)	406-258-6621
Randy Velin (Junior Director)	406-544-4582
Smoke Elser (Alternate)	406-549-2820

Committee Chairs

Issues:	Ken Brown
Social:	Nancy Chandler
Membership:	Codi Allen
Recreational Trails Grant:	Judy Allen
Defensive Horse Safety:	Dan Harper
Website Coordinators:	Adam Davis Kristen Brown
Feedbag Editor:	Bonnie Doyle

Upcoming Events

February:

22nd - Membership Roundup 6:30PM at Lolo Community Center

March:

4th - BCH Board meeting

18th - BCH General meeting 6:30PM at ORI. Program is State of the Art Communications options for the Back Country.

20th, 21st & 22nd - Montana BCH State Convention in Hamilton

April:

1st - BCH Board meeting

11th - Spring Tune-up at Basham arena 10AM, potluck and ride. RSVP to Gary Salisbury 406-529-7242

15th - BCH General meeting 6:30PM at ORI. Casey Burns presenting "Nine Mile Pack String".

18th - Tyler Creek Ride, 10AM & bring lunch. RSVP Richard Tamcke

25th - Defensive Horse Safety, 9AM & bring lunch. RSVP Dan Harper

May:

6th - BCH Board meeting

16th - Larry Creek Ride, 10AM & bring lunch. RSVP Gary Salisbury

20th - BCH General meeting, 6:30PM at ORI. Gary Salisbury and Kathy McGann present "Purchasing a Horse, What to look for".

30th - Blue Mtn ride, 10AM & bring lunch. RSVP Richard Tamcke

June:

3rd - BCH Board meeting

6th - National Trails Day at Blue Mtn trail head, 9AM, RSVP Randy Velin 406-544-4582

No General membership meeting this month

12-15th - Monture Creek/Burnt Cabin work project. RSVP Randy Velin

20th - Calf Creek ride, 10AM & bring lunch. RSVP Gary Salisbury

26-28th - Family Campout at Clearwater Blackfoot Game Range. RSVP Mike Moore 406-370-7549

*Photos courtesy of
Kathy McGann and
Bonnie Doyle*



Backcountry Horsemen of Missoula is starting a new mentoring program. This is a very important task as new generations come along and the responsibility of keeping our back country protected and accessible is passed on to them. The following is one of a collection of short stories which Nancy Chandler sent to me. These short stories were given to her in the late 90's by one of our long-time club members Connie Basham. Connie has graciously agreed to allow us to print these in the next few issues of the Feedbag as a reminder to all the importance of mentoring those up and coming Back Country Horsemen.

Bonnie Doyle, Editor

Connie writes...You asked me to write some of my memories of BCH, so here you go. Of course, you know I'm windy, so I hope you have time to read this. Here goes! I hope you don't expect dates or anything. To start with, I have to say that I have learned so much from all the "old timers" like Chuck Smith and Fred Hartkorn (sorry they are no longer with us), Smoke Elser, Mike Chandler, Bud Lake and Jim Brogger and others. It is something I feel so fortunate to have been able to participate in all these years--just to hang around these great back country horse



people and gather the wealth of knowledge and experiences I have. The times, friendships and events I will always treasure.

One of the first trips I can remember was a so called "learning trip" that Fred led for those of us who were considered "greene" packers. We supposedly were learning the ropes of packing, but I think the biggest thing I learned was how to prevent bear attacks. Huh!?, you say.

Well, we took the trip from Monture eventually leading to Smoke's hunting camp. Gloria Curdy and I were about the only women, I think. We sat around the fire that night in Smoke's camp telling bear stories which got started because Smoke's camp had been raided the year before, having done a great deal of damage to equipment. Although, I would never term myself as being a fraidy cat about bears, it kind of got us going. After all the snorers turned in that night, Gloria and I decided we had better tidy up camp just in case the bears did decide to visit us. So, there we were in the dark stumbling around putting things away trying to move the food and pack boxes as far away from our tent, which we conveniently pitched right next to the fire and camp (before the bear stories started), as possible. While we were doing that, we heard the bushes rattling and rocks tumbling down towards our camp. Of course, our hearts started racing. We were so sure it was a bear. We hid behind a couple of bushes as we waited for it to come down to camp. The closer it got, the more my blood pressure went up. When it finally reached the bottom of the hill, Gloria shined her light to see just what it was. There were two great big eyes shining right at us. Whew! Thank God bears eye don't shine. It was two harmless deer.

Needless to say, we were pretty pumped up by that time. So, Gloria said she had a sure-fire trigger that would let us know if a bear was checking out our tent. She went to the pack boxes and came back to the tent with this giant can of Cayenne pepper. Why we had a giant can of Cayenne pepper, I don't know. I've never even used a small one yet in all the years I've been cooking. Anyway, she sprinkled the whole can all the way around our tent. She said that if a bear came sniffing around, he would smell the pepper and start sneezing and it would irritate him long enough for us to get away. So, with the relief of having that barrier of protection, we got in the tent. I was trying to undress, and it was a coal black night, so I turned on my flashlight. She told me that bears would be attracted to light. So, I tried to hide it in my sleeping bag. That didn't give off enough light for me to see, so I crawled in the sleeping bag with the light and tried to get ready for bed. Talk about awkward!

To Picket or Not To Picket

In his book "Give Me Mountains For My Horses", Tom Reed relates a sad story that brought me back to a specific memory. Tom raised and trained a horse named "Grizz". Grizz became his favorite horse, his lead horse. On a pack trip into the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, Grizz was, as usual, picketed with a rope from the front pastern to a steel picket pin, pounded into the ground. Some of the other horses on the trip were hobbled and some were loose. The herd always kept close to where the lead horse was picketed. For reasons unknown, the herd spooked and bolted across the meadow with Grizz following. Unfortunately when Grizz hit the end of the picket rope, the pin pulled out of the ground. The rope, under great tension shot the pin like a guided missile, impaling the horse and penetrating into the chest. He was dead in ten minutes.

I had a similar experience with a picket pin and a horse. The mare, who had been trained on the picket, was on one side of the picket circle when the other horses and mules charged by. By the time she was on the other side of the circle, she was hitting a full gallop. I watched in horror as the rope stretched and tightened. I expected her to be thrown on her back, instead the pin shot out of the dirt and like an arrow, pierced the skin on her rib cage and bounced out, leaving the picket pin hanging, laced through three inches of skin. That was the last time I picketed a horse.

Here are some thoughts on how to safely picket a horse. A 20-30 foot 3/8 or 1/2 inch synthetic rope works well. In order to keep the rope from becoming entangled with loose rope, the last 8 to 10 feet should be a chain or alternatively the rope can be threaded through a length of garden hose. A strong steel picket pin with a point on one end and a swivel on the top works best in most situations. A padded picket hobble and a side line hobble will also be needed.

Good equipment is necessary, but good training is more important. In a confined area use a soft rope to teach the horse to easily give each foot to pressure. With a loop of rope around the pastern, pull and release until the horse easily yields to pressure. Repeat for each foot. Next, again in a confined area like a round pen, attach the side line hobble, back and front on the same side. Allow plenty of time for the horse to become accustomed to moving about in the hobble. Repeat this procedure for several days to ensure that the horse is doing well with the side line hobble. Next attach the picket hobble to the hind leg next to the side line hobble. Using the side line hobble in conjunction with the picket helps keep a startled horse from

getting up too much of a head of steam before hitting the end of the line. Attaching the picket to the hind leg keeps the leg from being pulled out from under the horse in an emergency. The picket pin must be securely in the ground. Pull the line to be sure that the horse gives to pressure. Limit the amount of line to 12 feet or so at first and always lead the horse to the end of line before releasing him to ensure the horse understands that he is constrained. Attach the rope to the picket swivel with a quick release knot that won't jam.

Clear the circle encompassed by the picket line of all debris and snags. The risk of problems increases if other horses and mules not part of your herd are present in the meadow. Move the picket often to avoid overgrazing. At first limit the picket rope to about 20 feet. At night high-line the horse for safety. Always start the training at home and progress to a mountain meadow when the horse is comfortable on the picket.

To picket or not to picket depends on the horse's temperament, good equipment and training. Also a suitable area for the picket is necessary.

Good luck with your horses in the mountains. Remember, "It is better to ride a thin horse than to chase a fat one".

Dan Harper



FIGURE: Side line hobble, rope with last 10 feet of garden hose and picket pin.

<<<<<Meet Your Officers, Board Members and State Directors>>>>>

Dan Harper (Past President)

Hobbies: Riding my mule in Western Dressage and obstacle course competitions. I enjoy providing pack support for volunteer Wilderness trail crews.

Favorite Horse: Is a mule, Kansas

Favorite Trail: In the Wilderness, usually where I am at and the trail that I am on.

Quote to Live by: Henry David Thoreau: "none are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm".

Famous Last Words: I wish to be a positive influence for the BCH of Missoula. I advocate for safe horse use and Wilderness preservation.



Judy Allen (Board member and Recreational Trails Grant)

Hobbies: Horses and quilting

Favorite Horse: I have had many favorites over the years but the current one is a little paint mare called Wrinkles.

Favorite Trail: Too many to choose from, probably wherever I am riding is the favorite at the moment.

Wildest Dream: To visit Australia and New Zealand

Quote to Live by: Enjoy the day, tomorrow is never guaranteed

Famous Last Words: Should have tried harder



Lee Crawford (Board Member)

Hobbies: Team roping and trailing riding

Favorite Horse: Rex

Favorite Trail: The ride to Burnt Cabin

Wildest Dream: Live alone with my horse in the back country surviving off the land.

Quote to Live by: "Get busy living or get busy dying." (I already almost died, that was no fun. So, I want to live with my horse, viewing the beautiful back country.)

Famous Last Words: "Get to the wood" (that's the saddle horn and when your team roping you have to get to the wood to stop the clock for a chance to win.)



Chuck Erickson (Board Member)

Hobbies: Keeping all my old farm equipment running and playing with my horses!

Favorite Horse: I've loved all the horses I've had over the years! My current horse Goose (funny story behind that name) we raised him from the day he was born.

Favorite Trail: I don't think I have a favorite trail, I like exploring new ones.

Wildest Dream: Spending more time horseback!

Quote to Live by: Treat others as you would like to be treated

Famous Last Words: Hold my beer and watch this!!



Gary Salisbury (Board Member)

Hobbies: Horse training, horse packing, fishing, riding lessons

Favorite Horse: Rio who died in 2003. Present favorite is Gunner

Favorite Trail: Any trail without logs across it.

Wildest Dream: Horse pack into 30 wilderness areas. Ten to go!

Quote to Live by: Never stop riding new country and meeting new friends.

Famous Last Words: Take a deep seat, a long rein and a far away look in your eyes!



Mike Chandler (Board Member)

Hobbies: Horses, Hunting, Guns, Farming

Favorite Horse: Val (3/4 Arab), now deceased

Favorite Trail: To Jumbo Lookout – Bob Marshall

Wildest Dream: I own the entire Bitterroot Valley and have 10 wives as great as Nancy to manage it!

Quote to Live by: The Golden Rule

Famous Last Words: I think we can make it.



Mike Moore (Board Member)

Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing and learning to Rope.

Favorite Horse: Griz

Favorite Trail: The one currently under my horse's feet.

Wildest Dream: Have the ability to time travel.

Quote to Live by: Sit tall in the saddle. Hold your head up high. Keep your eyes fixed where the trail meets the sky. Live like you ain't afraid to die. And don't be scared, just enjoy the ride?

Famous Last Words: Follow your own trail.



Richard Tamcke (State Board - Senior Director)

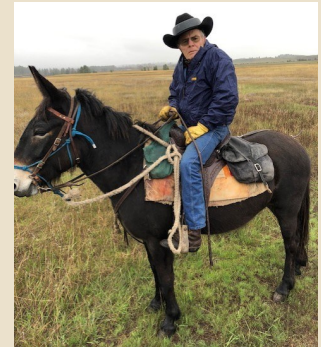
Hobbies: Horses, Woodcarving, Trail riding

Favorite Horse: Folly (Deceased)

Favorite Trail: North fork of Blackfoot river.

Wildest Dream: Lots more trips in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Famous Last Words: The outside of a horse is the best thing for the inside of a man.



Randy Velin (State Board – Junior Director)

Hobbies: Horse and mule packing.

Favorite Horse: Sabrina, a Grand Thoroughbred mare. Never gave me reason to talk bad about her!

Favorite Trail: Benchmark to North Fork of the Sun River.

Wildest Dream: Ride in the Southwest states.

Quote to Live by: A day spent in saddle is never wasted.

Famous Last words: That should've stayed on!!



IT IS ABOUT TIME

The unexpected happened suddenly with out warning. The rider had brought a horse to ride in our indoor arena on a wintery day. After walking and trotting around the arena, the rider urged the horse into a gallop. In three strides the horse became a runaway culminating in a violent man over the moon bucking launching the rider over the horses head. The rider flipped 200 degrees in the air landing on the head and back. The helmet had a large skid mark along one side. A trip to the emergency room confirmed a concussion and muscle injury. Undoubtedly the injury would have been worse without the helmet. The helmet was purchased and used specifically to comply with the mandate that all mounted riders must wear a helmet when using the arena.

In the last 40 years athletes in many sports have adapted to the use of helmets. Professional skiers, bikers, ATV riders among others have endorsed helmet use. When the United States Pony Clubs began to require that all riders wear helmets, the incidence of head injuries in riding accidents dropped from 29% to 8%. In England wide spread use of helmets has resulted in a nearly 50% reduction of hospitalizations following equestrian accidents.

The fact that 25% to 30% of equestrian accidents involve head injuries but result in 60% to 70% of deaths demonstrates the importance of head protection. English riders, especially in jumping events have long ago gravitated to wearing helmets. Regulations have helped speed the acceptance of helmets. All participants in U.S. Equestrian Federation events, including all jumping events, English and Western dressage, reining events and gaited events, are now required to wear approved helmets. It is not likely that trail riders will be mandated to wear helmets, but common sense should prevail.

I started riding with a western hat. Then one day my wife said “I would be an attractive widow” and handed me a helmet. I have been wearing a helmet on every ride since that time years ago. And yes, after years of using a helmet and never coming off of my horse, I had to retire a helmet damaged by a horse hoof after we went backward over an embankment. I got up and walked away. Without the helmet, ???.

The argument that it is only necessary to wear a helmet while riding a young horse or on the first rides in the spring makes as much sense as only wearing a seat belt on icy roads. Once a rider starts to wear a helmet he or she becomes a model of good behavior and opens the door for other riders to follow. A western rider is an athlete, and the use of a helmet reinforces that message.

Cost is really not an issue. American Society for Testing Materials and the Safety Institute (ASTM/SEI) approved equestrian helmets are available for \$25.00 and up. They come in many styles including helmets that incorporate a brimmed western hat.

The Back Country Horsemen organization emphasis safety in many ways including saw training and first aid. Horse safety involves using a helmet on every ride. It is about time that BCH trail riders routinely use helmets to provide a role model for others as well as providing protection for the rider (and his or hers loved ones).

IT IS ABOUT TIME!

Daniel A Harper, MD

