



The Feedbag

October 2020

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FOR SALE!!

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Volunteer Organization, 501c3

Presidents Letter

Howdy Missoula BCH members. Now, that fall seems to have arrived, I hope you all had a somewhat normal summer and got out on trails and our wonderful backcountry. Unfortunately, due to the covid situation and County restrictions along with the Lolo National Forest, not having any volunteer projects, we have had to cancel all of our normal events. The Board of Directors made these decisions for the safety of our membership, many of whom are considered at-risk.

I want to thank the Board Members that assembled recently, to have a meeting. We worked toward getting plans for accomplishing the business of the Chapter. We made the following decisions: 1) The Board will resume meetings, First Wednesday of the month starting November, most likely at Smoke's barn. 2) We will not host the December State Board Meeting, nor our usual Christmas Party due to the risk and venue availability. 3) I have appointed a nominating committee to recommend candidates for our annual elections. Hopefully that list may make it into this Newsletter. If you would like to nominate folks to any position/s please contact a nominating committee member – Randy Velin, Mike Moore & Nancy Chandler. 4) We are still considering options to hold elections, possibly by e-mail, mail in, phone calls, or maybe a December membership meeting. 5) We have decided to pay the dues to use the Lolo Community Center, where we may be able to safely hold meetings and functions. 6) We are going forward with our Mentoring program, and mentors will start contacting candidates to start matching up folks. If you are interested in a particular mentor, please contact that person.

We need to fill positions to chair our Publicity Committee, and our Membership Committee. If can help, please contact any Board Member.

With hunting season just around the corner, stay safe, and hopefully you have hay and wood gathered for winter and your ponies stay full and healthy.



Dave Schilz

President BCH Missoula

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

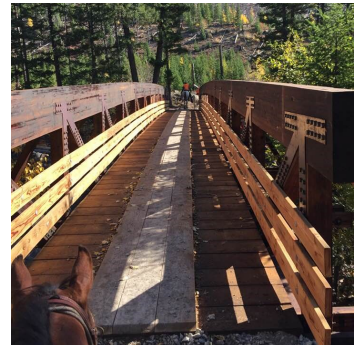
***An Important message from the
BCH of Missoula Board of Directors***

We are seeking a BCH member to fill a vacant position on our board of directors.

No previous experience needed, just a passion for our mission and helping BCH as we move forward in uncertain times. We still need to protect our ability to ride and pack on public land and wilderness areas. We need ideas and input on our public outreach for educational programs and trainings we can provide that would have value to the community. The board meets usually once a month September – June. You do not need to own or even ride a horse or mule to be valuable voice in helping direct our future. We welcome talking with you about becoming a board member.

If interested please contact one of us for more information before November 1st.

Randy Velin ***406-544-4582***
Mike Moore ***406-370-7549***
Nancy Chandler ***406-549-7639***



Bridge located on the North Fork of the Blackfoot River
(Photo credit Randy Velin)

Back Country Horsemen of Missoula

~Mission Statement~

To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America’s back country and wilderness.

To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreation and stock use.

To assist the various agencies responsible for the maintenance and management of public lands.

To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustained use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.

To foster and encourage formation of new Back Country Horsemen organizations.

My First Pack Trip

I've never been one for camping. Some who have known me most of my life would say I'm not even one for the outdoors. But when I first heard about the idea of camping and packing with horses, I was intrigued. I had a feeling that I am a camping person, so long as equines are involved. So when Dan Harper invited me on a pack trip at the North Fork of the Blackfoot River, I accepted readily.

Packing itself was all the more foreign to me — all I could remember was the vague plot of *Brightly of the Grand Canyon* from when I was a little kid. In the months leading up to the trip, I read books on packing and asked Dan every question I could think of: "What about bears?" "How will we make potable water?" "How does a highline work?" He answered my questions thoroughly and responded with only one: "What kind of wine do you like?"



Carey and Tonal, Marjorie Harper's smart and capable Andalusian cross, at a river crossing (photo credit Dan Harper)

On the morning of July 15 I sprung out of bed and went to the Harpers to help load the horses and mules. We arrived to the trailhead parking lot by mid-morning and began to unload and pack everything onto the animals. We had a quick lunch and then all seven of us headed out on the trail: Ken and his son-in-law Travis, who came down from Helena for the trip, Dave, Randy, his granddaughter Kara, and their friend Dwayne, myself and Dan.

The ride was 11 miles into the camp site at Canyon Creek and it was a cloudless, sunny afternoon. The trail started off with a harrowing drop-off (to me, an East Coast gal) down to the Blackfoot. We meandered through river crossings and climbed up grassy bluffs. We arrived at camp and got to work unloading, unpacking, and organizing. Once everyone was settled, we turned in just after sundown.

The first full day of camp was a welcome reprieve of rest — not only because of the heat but also because my new found fear of grizzly bears kept me awake most of the night. We followed the shade as the sun moved and talked. I found comfort in the simplicity of the schedule at camp: feeding the stock, turning them out to graze, taking them to drink, and tying them up.

The second day was cooler and we saddled up for a day trip to the Danaher. We officially crossed into the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, which was my very first time. I even had a mini-celebrity moment of passing a group of young friends from Belt, Montana who were riding from the Idaho border all the way to Canada to raise money for cancer research. I recognized them from the news coverage of their unique trip. We passed other pack strings and I marveled at a singular cowboy's ability to control so many stock over varied terrain.

In the end the trip was exactly what I had hoped it to be, and more. At times I felt useless and inexperienced, but then there were moments when I knew what to do and how to help. Most of all, I made wonderful memories with new friends and kind animals. Sitting around the campfire swapping stories and drinking wine was a reminder of how little we need fill our cups (literally and figuratively). It was a trip I'll always remember, and I'm forever grateful to Dan, Ken, Travis, Dave, Dwayne, Randy and Kara for being so welcoming to me.

Carey Powers



Most of the group at camp on the last day (photo credit Randy Velin)

Missoula Back Country Horsemen Start Mentoring Program

For the past several years, local, state and national BCH organizations have voiced distress about groups' dwindling numbers, difficulty recruiting new members and concerns that back country packing is on the verge of becoming a lost art. The Missoula BCH group shared these concerns and decided to do something about it.

On January 8, 2020, Gary Salisbury made a motion to the Board to start up a formalized mentoring program, to increase participation on our group's activities, make new members feel more welcome and share wisdom and knowledge learned through years of back country packing with future generations. Since then, we've been gathering surveys from members and compiling lists of people that would like to be matched with a mentor and those with extensive experience willing to give the gift of time to pass on their time-tested practice of staying safe on the trails with stock.

The objectives of the Mentoring Committee of the BCHM are to make new members feel welcome, appreciated and valuable; increase participation by members in meetings, events and projects and get members packing in the back country; retain members for life; share horsemanship and packing skills with others; increase overall skill level of group; and to perpetuate the mission & heritage of BCH for future generations.

Mentors can serve in a variety of capacities—whatever is most helpful—including making reminder calls prior to events; explaining details of events and how to get there; providing transportation to BCH meetings; helping developing safe horsemanship skills; teaching pack-

ing skills; being available for phone consultations with horsemanship questions; loaning books & educational materials; and/or explaining current issues facing BCH and shared opportunities for involvement in political events pertaining to BCH or public lands.

Unfortunately, COVID hit as we were planning a roll-out and has definitely slowed—but not cancelled—our progress. Many of you returned the recently emailed questionnaires but, in case you haven't, there is still plenty of time. If you need a questionnaire, are interested in having a mentor or are willing to serve as a mentor, send me an email at kirstenpabst@gmail.com

I know I am deeply grateful for the mentoring I've received from mentors like Randy Vellin, Gary Salisbury and Dan Harper. Their willingness to share their time and expertise has made me a better horseperson and—literally—kept me in the saddle!

Kirsten Pabst

Secretary BCH Missoula



Kirsten and Uhtred

The Great Burn

I've wanted to learn how to pack with stock for many years. Packing is the perfect combination of my lifelong horse addiction and my love of backpacking and exploring new areas rolled into one activity. I jumped at the chance to learn when Missoula BCH members Dan Harper, Ken Brown, and Kathy McGann invited me on my very first pack trip into the Great Burn Recommended Wilderness. This destination was particularly special since I am the Stewardship and Outreach Director at the Great Burn Conservation Alliance (formerly known as the Great Burn Study Group). For the last 50 years, GBCA has worked to permanently protect wildlands in the northern Bitterroot mountains through advocacy, collaboration, and on the ground stewardship.



The group arriving at Faley Basin

The group met on a Sunday at Clearwater Crossing, with the plan of heading up the West Fork of Fish Creek (trail 101), staying at Faley Basin for two nights, and heading back over Chilcoot Pass and down Straight Creek (trail 99). Ken Brown was nice enough to lend me a riding horse, Tux, and with the addition of Dan's two mules and Kathy's horse Brutus as pack stock, the seven of us hit the trail. This area has seen several burns in recent years, and the brush enveloping the trail was thick. However, the horses made quick work of it, and soon we were winding our way through old growth cedars and up to Faley Basin. Camp was cool and calm, with surprisingly few bugs and plenty of good grass for the animals. For the humans, a plethora of peanut M&M's, a surprisingly large amount of Saint Peter jokes, and all around good company made for a wonderful night in camp.

On Monday the group split up, with Dan and Ken scouting our planned exit route on trail 114 towards Siamese Lakes, and Kathy and I riding north on the Stateline Trail (#738). The State-



Kathy heading up Stateline Trail with her horses Shiney and Brutus

line offers incredible vistas in all directions as it crisscrosses the Idaho/Montana border, and fully lived up to its reputation. After a wonderful day riding the Stateline, we received the report that the planned route over Chilcoot Pass would be too rough for our group, so we agreed heading back down the West Fork the following day would be the best decision. That evening in camp, we noticed Tux was looking a bit colicky, and after some quick action by our resident veterinarian Kathy, a dose of Banamine, and a cool down session in the creek, we had him feeling much better by dinner time. Just a good reminder to hydrate - for both humans and equines! The next morning everyone was in fine form and after rebalancing a couple loads, we made good time back to the trailhead.

I can't begin to cover all of the new things I learned on this trip, but there are several takeaways that I will share. First, it is absolutely amazing how much country one person can cover on a horse. Second, balanced loads are really important....like really, really, really important! Third, I need to up my Saint Peter joke



Happy hobbled horses (photo credit Kathy McGann)

The Great Burn (cont.)

arsenal if I'm going to run with this crew. I also realized that I don't need a huge string of mules behind me to get into the backcountry. In fact, maybe the most realistic model for me right now is to walk with a loaded horse, or have one pack animal. Bottom line - packing with stock is attainable for me and can take many forms.

Finally, we owe it to ourselves, our stock, and the wild places we love to become an advocate. This was made clear when we encountered two mountain bikers completing a large loop starting at Hoodoo Pass. I fear this type of use will only become more prevalent as the Missoula population grows and mountain bike technology advances. Although the interaction went smoothly, it was a stark reminder that multiple use trails are incredibly dangerous to stock users, and showed the importance of maintaining an active and strong voice in public policy and planning.

This was such a memorable trip, and I cannot thank Dan, Ken, and Kathy enough for introducing me to the basics of packing. Being in the backcountry with stock is not only an amazing way to spend time with horses and mules, but also to meet fantastic people and experience truly wild places like the Great Burn.

Hayley Newman



Hayley and Tux on the Stateline Trail with Fish Lake in the background (photo credit Kathy McGann)

Each year GBCA accomplishes a variety of stewardship projects to maintain the wilderness quality of the area, which includes trail maintenance, noxious weed mitigation, and patrolling areas for illegal use. If you would like more information on how you can be involved and advocate for the Great Burn, please visit www.greatburn.org.

Words Really Matter

Gemma Troy summed it up in one plain sentence: Remember your words can plant gardens or burn whole forests down.

One of our greatest challenges as an organization is sustainability. A recurrent theme we hear at state and local meetings is how to grow our membership so that our mission endures into perpetuity, for our children and grandchildren and their children. For our mission to become legacy, it is imperative that we focus on recruiting, welcoming and--most importantly--keeping new members.

How do we do that?

The best way to garner interest is to provide lots of opportunities—volunteer, educational, or just fun—for all skill levels and include people with and without stock. When someone new shows up, go out of your way to welcome them and introduce them to other members. Be respectful when communicating and avoid inappropriate humor, personal questions and politics, because that is the fastest way to make sure someone doesn't come back. They probably won't confront you about it—you'll just never see them again. Also remember that as a longstanding member, young, shy or new recruits are intimidated by those with vast experience. Approach them with a smile and friendly "hello" every time.

Stay in touch with new members and interested people. Understand that making people feel welcome must be intentional and takes effort. It isn't enough to call once. It is about developing trust in a new person and following through, over and over. Soon enough your efforts will pay off and that newbie will be the next old-timer out recruiting new members too.

Finally, we should commit to our shift in approach from *teaching*—telling others what we know-- to *mentoring*, which focuses on relationships. Mentors guide by showing, demonstrating, and providing feedback. Mentors impart their wisdom and practical insight to encourage learners to develop their own skillset.

I've been blessed to have mentors like Gary Salisbury, Randy Velin and Dan Harper helping me become a better horseperson and public lands advocate. They are my heroes and the reason I am proud to be an active part of the Missoula chapter. When we invest in people and use our words scrupulously, we are not just planting gardens, we are ensuring that the great work of the Back Country Horseman will endure long after we are gone.

Kirsten Pabst

Secretary, BCH Missoula

MARYETTA BAUER

(May 1946 - April 2020)

Mike and I received a phone call in late March from a very special old friend and fellow BCH member to share some news...she was calling to tell us "goodbye". She was counting her days down (they had given her two weeks to live) and she wanted us to share the news with others close to her. (It was especially important to her that we knew it wasn't COVID.) She was spending her last days at her daughter's lovely home on Bainbridge Is. What a difficult call...however, we both reminisced our happy times together on horseback and on BCH trips and laughed between tears. I promised to share the news with those who knew her.

This story is two-fold – first to share a little about Maryetta and her amazing resilience, and secondly to emphasize horse safety.

I find records of Maryetta becoming a member in 1975. She served as a Board member and joined us on our first issues trip into the Pintlars in the late 1970's, and numerous trips and projects thereafter.

It was a beautiful spring day in 1982 and a number of us had congregated at Clearwater Crossing the night before our annual steak ride. Several of us were taking a short walk before dinner and met Maryetta riding a different horse than her usual beautiful black horse. When I asked who he was, she said, "oh, I have had him several years, have taken him on several trips but needed to get him rideable for the girls. He has been difficult, and it is time he learns something!" Poor choice...shortly after that someone ran into camp and said..."come quickly, we were watering the horses along the river after our ride and Maryetta's horse threw her...she appears badly hurt". Life Flight came quickly and by the next day we learned that she had broken her back, severed her spine and was hospitalized in Missoula. Maryetta would never walk again, but she would ride again!

Immediately the Missoula BCH members rose to the occasion, offering assistance when needed and supporting her during the following weeks, months, and years. We held a raffle for a deluxe pack trip for three couples into the Chinese Wall in the Bob Marshall and raised almost \$10,000 in raffle proceeds from which she purchased an SUV specially equipped for a handicapped driver and made accommodations to her home. Maryetta spent some time in a rehabilitation program at a hospital in Denver and eventually resettled with her two teenaged daughters to the Polson area. Again BCH members in that area supported many of her needs. And, she purchased a Paso Fino horse, specially trained by Lee Litton of Polson, so she could hit the trail again. She had a special saddle made which had a "roll bar" to stabilize her. Her feet were secured to the stirrups. It was amazing to see her innovations, including how she drove to the pasture to feed and how (with help of course) started riding with BCH again. Rye let her move around him in her wheelchair and happily accommodated her brushing him and leading him. She designed special features on her horse trailer so that she could load him herself. The trailer had a great living space, again complete with special innovations.

Maryetta not only rode, but pursued other activities most of us wouldn't undertake – campaigning for the State legislature, sitting on a state

medical board representing handicapped people, and volunteering at a local business. Many of us saw her again at state BCH conventions. She designed, fabricated and sold her "Tagalongs", which were a bare-back child's pad enabling children to ride behind their parents.

Maryetta's greatest dream was to get back into the Bob. For her 50th birthday, her family decided to give her a deluxe trip into the wilderness with Smoke and Thelma Elser. Mike and I were invited to go along as helpers. What an amazing trip! (Another story for another time). My favorite memory was of a gorgeous summer evening in the Danaher when Maryetta asked Mike to wheel her out into the pasture where the stock was grazing. They spent close to an hour talking and enjoying the sunset. As they returned to camp, I noticed teary eyes... Mike confided Maryetta had said to him, "I never thought I would see this again in my life...how very special it is to me!" This still brings tears to my eyes.

As the years progressed, Maryetta was fortunate to have a house built at the south end of Flathead Lake with a spectacular view of the Mission Mountains. Her house, self-designed to accommodate a handicapped resident, had an outside terrace with planter boxes as her "garden" and a large horse pasture where Rye lived in his aging years. I think the last time we saw Maryetta was at Smoke and Thelma's at an anniversary party (several years ago) and she had made a special trip down from Polson. As her health deteriorated, she was able to have daily outside help and stay in her lovely location until her final illness which took her to Washington State and her daughter's home. There she had a room looking out into the ocean, watching boats come into the sound and watch the seals and other wildlife.

Maryetta's (Maryetta Bauer) FACEBOOK page features a wonderful slideshow thanks to her daughters. A memorial will eventually be held, once we recover from the pandemic. Her very special grandson is living in her home in Polson.

Nancy Chandler, BCH Missoula



Maryetta and Rye

References from an article in the Rocky Mountain Rider, Natalie Riehl, 1992, reprinted September 2012.

FOR SALE

Saddles and packing equipment for sale!!
Contact **Randy Velin** at **406-544-4582** for
more information and pricing!!!

