



The Feedbag

January 2021

In this Issue

- 2 - Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs
- 2 - IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!
- 2 - BCH Mission Statement
- 3 - New Board Member bios
- 4 - Erin Clark –Wilderness update
- 4 - Leading Group Rides
by Dan Harper
- 5 - Barbara Koepke obituary
- 6 - 2021 Membership form

Website:

<http://bchmt.org/wp/missoula>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/missoulabch/>

Address:

BCH of Missoula
P.O. Box 2121
Missoula, MT 59806

Volunteer Organization, 501c3

President's Letter:

Hello Back Country Horsemen of Missoula. It may seem that our organization is in a three leg hobble finding it difficult to move. Nevertheless we are on our way to Greener pastures.

FIRST: The board is delighted with the addition of two newer members, Carey Powers and Robert Braun. They are arriving with their sleeves rolled up ready to work. While the first board meeting was conducted by email and phone the next board meeting on February 3 at 6:30 will be on zoom. Any member can tune in, Email me for an access code.

SECOND: The board has reduce the membership fee, for this year only, to \$25 for a single membership and \$35 for a family membership. In addition the board approved a resolution asking the State BCH to forgo the State dues assessment for each member for the 2021 year. Please renew your membership and help keep our organization strong.

THIRD: As soon as safely possible we will plan to schedule the defensive horse safety clinic, the pannier packing clinic and the saddle selection and fitting clinic. Hopefully we can start doing some group trail rides by late spring. In addition the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation has changed their policies to help attract more packers to support volunteer trail crews. A packer (or the organization) could easily net more than \$1,000 for a pack in and pack out for a trail crew. We will aggressively pursue this possibility. In addition there is an opportunity to pack out trash for the Great Burn Conservation Alliance. The board decided not to produce a calendar this year considering the uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic. There seems to be a lot of enthusiasm for an end of summer camp and trail ride perhaps at the Fish Creek Clearwater Trail head. As I look out of my January window, the thought of a BCH camp with campfire cooking, trail rides, games and entertainment seems pretty enticing.

FORTH: The best thing we can do now is to focus on the Feedbag. Please give thought to writing an article for the newsletter. Keep in contact with your friends and fellow riders in the club by phone whenever possible. Let's keep the membership informed and together.

I certainly hope to see most of you at one of the clinics and at a meeting before toooo long. Clean and oil those saddles and get ready to ride. Let's keep it together!

Dan Harper, President
406-258-6467
dharp300@gmail.com



BCH of Missoula Officers, Board and Committees

Officers

Dan Harper	President	406-258-6467
Ken Brown	Vice President	406-207-6067
Kirsten Pabst/Judy Allen	Secretary	406-396-7050 406-274-2339
Deb Monson	Treasurer	406-244-0039
Randy Velin	Past President	406-544-4582

Board of Directors

One year remaining:

Mike Chandler, Mike Moore, Gary Salisbury

Two year term:

Robert Braun, Charles Erickson, Carey Powers

State Directors

Randy Velin (Senior Director)	406-544-4582
Judy Allen (Junior Director)	406-274-2339
Smoke Elser (Alternate)	406-549-2820

Committee Chairs

Issues:	Ken Brown
Social Chair:	Nancy Chandler, Lee and Terry Roogensack
Membership Chair:	Mary Erickson
Defensive Horse Safety:	Dan Harper
Website Coordinators:	Adam Davis Kristen Brown
Feedbag Editor:	Bonnie Doyle

Things To Do:

Print off and fill out your 2021 membership form on the last page of this newsletter. Send completed forms along with your payment to:

BCH of Missoula
P.O. Box 2121
Missoula, MT 59806

Welcome our new board members Carey Powers and Robert Braun. Read their bios on the next page!!

The Feedbag is always looking for new stories!! Start writing now and submit for the upcoming issue(s). Remember pictures are always a nice edition to any article.

Join our next board meeting via Zoom!! February 3rd at 6:15pm. Contact Dan Harper for more information and a link to the meeting.

HAPPY TRAILS!!

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.

Carey Powers hails from Charlottesville, Virginia, and moved to Missoula in 2019. She currently works as the Marketing Coordinator at the Missoula Art Museum. She grew up riding western and learned to foxhunt in high school. Her riding adventures have taken her to Argentina (pictured) as a riding guide and the Bighorn Mountains in Wyoming as a wrangler. She is eager and excited to learn more about packing and the backcountry.

Happy to help out with Zoom (masked, of course) and make sure you're all set.



Hi Guys!

I am so excited to be part of the board, and very appreciative for the vote of confidence! I was born and raised in New York City doing the wall street thing. After making some trips to places other than big cities I made the move out to Western Montana in 1994 and simply fell in love with the western lifestyle, the wide open spaces, and the wilderness. Along that Journey I have also picked up the passion for horses and I learned the joy of riding and experiencing the wilderness from the back of a good ol' horse! I live here in Stevensville along with my wife and 4 children, 4 horses, goats, chickens, dogs, cats, birds and the rest. I am sure that the high school me would never believe the life that the 52 year old me is living, and more importantly, how much I love it!!

I love the outdoor, and horse lifestyle and can certainly appreciate the need to share it and preserve it because as we all know that in this modern

world, sadly it is going away. I am happy to do what I can to change that!

I have worked with quite a few charity organizations in my life and am hoping that I can bring something to the table for this group!

There are so many wonderful trails around the local area to choose from, but I was asked to share some of my favorites. I sure love the Fred Burr trail up to the reservoir, and the convenience of Larry Creek, or the view from the east side of the valley at Calf Creek, or the forested ride up at Coyote Coulee. The Lubrecht forest ride was also wonderful! I was also asked to share a little about my favorite horse, and I am partial to Paints, but (and don't tell my other horses) I've hit all the above trails with my big old grandpa quarter horse. Sure he's a little old, sure he's a little swayed in the back, sure he loves to walk on the very edge of every trail on a steep hillside, and sure he goes crazy over carrots, but that ol' boy has been a great pal over many years!

I am really looking forward to riding with everyone, seeing new places, doing some great work and being a productive member of the organization!!

Here I am with my Covid beard and my paint horse Flower.

Robert Braun



The Missoula and Selway-Pintler Backcountry Horsemen Chapters, along with Montana Wilderness Association and several other conservation and sportsperson groups and organizations, have been interveners in a legal case brought against the Bitterroot National Forest by motorized user groups challenging the 2016 Travel Plan Record of Decision. In October, the Ninth Circuit District Court in Seattle heard arguments from all sides. It is typical for the judges to release a decision within six months. In this case, they very quickly made and issued a decision in November upholding the Bitterroot Travel Plan's restrictions for motorized and mechanized use. This decision became final in December 2020.

This is a huge step towards completing our defense of this travel plan, which firmly protects the wilderness character of wilderness study areas and recommended wilderness on this forest. The Bitterroot National Forest's supervisor does still have legal space to consider allowing some mechanized use in the two wilderness study areas, per a separate legal appeal that was filed by mountain biking interests. It will be important for us to continue to advocate for the Sapphire and Blue Joint wilderness study areas until the supervisor's decision is issued.

Erin Clark

*Western Montana Field Director
Montana Wilderness Association*



Photo via internet search of Sapphire-Blue Joint Wilderness

LEADING GROUP RIDES

It's just January but here I am dreaming about trail rides and pack trips. As always safety of the members is a prime concern for the backcountry Horsemen. As we become able to do group rides this year it is important to remember the special responsibilities of the trail leader. Here are a few considerations for the trail leader.

1. Ensure that the chosen trail is appropriate for the safety of the group.
2. Focus on the least experienced rider and horse with non-condescending advice and help which could include the evaluation of the horse and tack.
3. No rider should move out until all riders are in the saddle and indicate that they are ready to ride.
4. Go only as fast as the slowest horse. Most trail riding is done at a walk. A change of pace or a decision to dismount should generally be discussed with a group before implementation.
5. Depending on the situation an experienced rider maybe chosen to go last. In any case the leader must look around and be aware of the status of the riders in the group.
6. Warn of hazards on the trail and spread out going down a steep hill.
7. Notice the scenery, identify the flowers and enjoy the ride. Plan to discuss the ride and enjoy a laugh or two back at the trailers.

Dan Harper



Photo credit Bonnie Doyle - Trail ride to Twogood Cabin

Barbara M. Koepke (Kurimsky/Smail)

Beloved and beautiful mother, the family matriarch, wife, sister, dear friend, grammy to many, role model, leader, mentor, and kind and compassionate soul, Barbara M. Koepke (Kurimsky/Smail), 80, of Huson, Montana, passed away Saturday, December 12, 2020, with her saddlebags packed ready for her final ride on The Last Trail. Barbara spent her final months joyfully reflecting on her extraordinary life, full of love and laughter reminiscing with family and friends. A true coal miner's daughter and Pittsburgh Steelers fan, she was born in Newfield, PA. Shortly after graduating from Plum High School, her high IQ, determination, and strong work ethic helped her secure a career in the Seismic, Gravity, and Magnetic R&D Divisions at Gulf Research and Development Company. She married her high school sweetheart, Art Smail, moved to CA, then to NM, finally making a permanent home for their family in Las Vegas in 1972. It is here where she obtained her degree in Drafting Technology and established Barabbi Enterprises, her freelance drafting business. Cancer took Art at an early age with mom at his bedside and she devoted her future to raising her daughters in the role of both mother and father cultivating their dreams and bringing them joy with her unconditional love. She met her best friend and soul mate, Jim Koepke, at a church function and remarried in 1987. An outdoor enthusiast, avid horseman, animal lover, licensed student pilot, with a sharp talent for art and architecture, it was always Barbara's dream to move to the mountains in Montana and that dream became a reality when she and Jim established Barabbi Ranch in Huson, MT, in May of 2001. Throughout her life, she was incredibly gifted in so many areas and accomplished so much including helping to design and customize the dream homes for many area residents in both Nevada and Montana. She was very active in the development and design of the regional trails system and her 'voice' was sought after to announce the major horse shows in Las Vegas for a career spanning over 14 years. She was heavily involved in 4-H, dog obedience training, veterinary science, while mentoring the next generation of leaders and being called "mom" by so many. She was not only a Woman Warrior raised to protect us, she was a Wisdom Warrior, and so many young women looked up to her for her guidance, courage, strength, authenticity, and integrity, especially her daughters. A woman of undeniable faith brimming with spirit, loyalty, and inspiration, she was an active member of the Catholic church always volunteering her time (most recently at St. Albert's and St. John the Baptist) and drawing people closer to Jesus just by living a purpose-driven life. Barbara's primary

passions were her Faith, Family, Friends, Foals, and Fillies. Her continued love for horses and trail riding led her to become a proud member of Montana's Back Country Horseman Association. Jim never got to see mom through her first battle with cancer as he died on the day of her second chemo treatment in 2005 yet his spirit continued to live through her. The memory of our brave Barbara now forever lives on through her two loving daughters, son-in-law, sister, brother, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and their children, her horse Toby, four-legged grandchildren, and a host of so many close friends and neighbors who all were considered part of her extended family. As our bold and beautiful mom would say, she wanted to 'live' until the day she died. Private services will be held and a special mass will be offered. In lieu of sending flowers and cards to the family, before Barb passed she said with her ever-infectious smile, "I would like for people to pay it forward with a genuine smile, kindness in your heart, do not be afraid, and to sit tall in the saddle always remembering to enjoy the ride." Mom, your love lifted us up higher and higher into the sky until we had to let go of your hand as you continued to soar towards the healing light. You taught us everything we know except how to live without you. Thank you for making this world a better place, the precious and meaningful life you led and created for your family, and the many lives you impacted. Until we can feel your loving arms around us again, your legacy will live on as we follow in your footsteps...working hard, doing our duty, and leaving the rest to God. Long may you soar with the eagles and horses high on a ridge in a race with the wind, Mama Bear. Peace be with you.



BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MISSOULA

P. O. Box 2121 Missoula, MT 59806

Membership Application

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

PHONE #: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

ATTENTION!!

Notice of Risks Inherent in Equine Activities!! Serious injury or even death can result from equine riding and related activities. There are risks inherent in equine activities, and these dangers or conditions that are an integral part of equine activities include but are not limited to: a) the propensity of an equine to behave in ways that may result in injury or harm or the death of persons on or around the equine; b) the unpredictability of an equine’s reaction to such things as medication, sound, sudden movements, and unfamiliar objects, persons or other animals; c) hazards, such as surface and subsurface ground conditions; d) collisions with other equines or objects; e) the potential of another participant to not maintain control over the equine or to not act within the person’s ability.

Participants in any equine activity shall act in a safe and responsible manner at all times to avoid injury to themselves and others and shall be aware of the risks inherent in equine activities.

The Back Country Horsemen of Missoula shall not be liable for injury to or the death of a participant as a result of their voluntary participation in any sponsored activity.

****I certify that I have read and understand the above notice****

MEMBERSHIP DUES

_____ **Family: \$35/year** **New Member** _____

_____ **Individual: \$20/year** **Renewal** _____

_____ **Secondary Membership: \$15/year**

Membership is on a calendar year basis (expires December 31st). Please make payments to Back Country Horsemen of Missoula. Any membership dues received after October 1st will be applied to the following calendar year.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Feedbag (quarterly club newsletter)? **EMAIL**_____ **MAIL**_____

Occasional notices of meetings, rides, and special events? **EMAIL**_____ **CALL**_____

State BCH Newsletter? **EMAIL**_____ **MAIL**_____

Print Name_____ ****Signature**_____ **Date**_____