

THE PICKET LINE

February 2007



Officers

President

Dan Marsh 587-7578

Vice President

Bob Steinman 282-7166

Secretary

Nancy Winget 582-5795

Treasurer

Brenda Kessler 763-4241

Directors

2 yr

Jim Albright 995-4441

Dan Alderman 388-9080

Rich Winget 582-5795

1 yr

Wally Becker 587-9607

Dan Porter 388-0290

Larry Thomas 586-6878

State Board Members

Rich Inman 2 yr

Dan Marsh 1 yr

Alternate: Jan Elpel 1yr

Newsletter Editor

Jiffie Hale 763-4105

Mobile 580-6455

jhale@littleappletech.com

BCH Web Master

Dan Marsh 587-7578

dmarsh@montana.edu

Backcountry Horsemen Mission Statement

“The purpose of this organization shall be (1) to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in Montana’s road less back country and (2) to assist the various government agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource and (3) to educate and solicit active participation by various members of the general public in the wise and sustaining use of horses and people, commensurate with our heritage and the back country’s resource.”

Board Meeting — Thursday, February, 1, 2007 @ 7p

**Dan Porter’s Century 21 office @ 1941 West Main*

General Meeting — Thursday, February 15th @ 6p*

Belgrade Alliance Church

**Wild meat Potluck supper—bring casserole and utensils*

Brian McNeil, FS Trails Supervisor — speaker

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FEBRUARY 2007

President's Report, January 22, 2007

Thanks to Dan Porter we have a place for the board of directors to meet. Dan is offering the Century 21 Summit Realty meeting room at 1941 West Main Street as our new meeting place.

We had our annual general meeting for setting the schedule for 2007. We got the dates for our important events lined out and once again we have a full ride schedule. If you are interested in leading a trail ride please let me know and I am sure we can fit it into the schedule. The combined Christmas party with the Gallatin Saddle Club was a big hit and I was asked to see if we could have another combined party again next year. A suggestion was made to make our annual Steak Ride at Spanish Peaks a combined event with the Gallatin Saddle Club and we will act as hosts for that event.

We have the Back Country Horsemen of Montana convention in Lewistown this year on March 30th through April 1st. We need eight delegates to go to the convention. More people are certainly welcome, but the club will pay the convention fee for the eight delegates this year. There are raffle tickets available with a bunch of nice items that were donated. For more information about the convention please visit

the web site at <http://www.bchmt.org>. The board will be working on a resolution to present at the convention thanking Rebecca Heath of the Gallatin Forest Service for working with the stock users in developing the Travel Plan.

We have a new member and a new publicity Chairman Maggie Goertz who will try to get us some badly needed visibility in the community. Thanks for stepping up to the plate Maggie and welcome aboard. I still need someone to take the lead on getting programs set up for the year. Please call or send me an email if you could take on this responsibility. We will also need someone to take the lead on the Horse Safety Training, Poker Ride, and Steak Ride.

The next meeting will be pot luck and hopefully we will get someone from the Forest Service to go over the volunteer program and hand out the necessary volunteer forms. Sabrina Hanan has volunteered to present a program in March or April and present an EQUUS Clinic for a discounted rate in April if there is enough interest from the club. Check out Sabrina's web site at <http://www.allaboutwork.net> to get a preview of what the clinic is all about.

Dan Marsh, President

FEBRUARY NOTES

****Note the board meeting has changed to Dan Porter's Century 21 office at 1941 West Main across from the Burger King between Pierce Flooring and the old Gibson's store. Its on the north side of main street. Parking is in the back. Coming from the west on Route 191 it's best to turn left at West Babcock at the red light and then a quick right into and across the Gibson's parking lot, past the quick lube and then straight across north 20th street into our parking lot.**

****The Potluck supper—bring a wild meat casserole, or any type of casserole, or a salad, or a dessert, and your utensils. Coffee provided. Remember we eat at 6p. Brian will speak about trails and the sign up sheets will need your signature -- required for workman's compensation to work on trails. He will probably have more information. Come, see and hear. Supper at 6p.**

****Your schedule of 2007 events is inserted. Each month we will update as necessary and that information will be placed in the NL.**

****Your roster will be inserted in the March issue after dues have been paid for 2007.**

****Now what did I forget to tell you? Oh, if you want to place an ad for "SALE ITEMS" that can be arranged.**

Sabrina Hanan Clinic

Sabrina Hanan has offered to give our club an EQuus Clinic to interested persons and open this event to the region as a draw to increase membership in BCH. Her usual charge is \$165 per person, but she will reduce her rate to \$100. This is a 4½ hr course with 2½ hours classroom/2 hours in the arena. Limit 10 participants.

Sabrina's web site for clinic information: <http://allaboutwork.net/WhatAAWCanDoForYou.html>

If there is enough response we will have the clinic. Email Sabrina at info@allaboutwork.net

CHARTER OLDSTERS STILL HERE

Gallatin Valley Backcountry Horsemen have 3 charter members, Betty White, Wally Becker and Les Witmer who have been here since the club was formed and earlier. These members have many interesting memories of the past when the club formed their charter in the mid '80's. But I am not writing about our charter as that is for a later article and an interesting one.

I could begin with "age before beauty," but that would be impossible as Betty White has both age and beauty. She began her life in Texas on March 16, 1923. She has a picture of her father holding her as an infant as he sits on his horse. She may have begun to ride at age 3, but she claims, "I think I was born on a horse." Bettye spent her youth barrel racing, graduated from college in Texas with a major in business administration, married twice, and has 2 daughters and 1 son. She has been a rancher her whole life. She moved from Texas to Colorado before arriving in Montana. Bettye was among those who began the GVBCB charter and has held every office except state delegate and vice president. She just finished a term as our treasurer. This lady still rides today and every day possible, weather permitting, year round. However, she is also known to ride in the snow and rain -- deliberately. Bettye rides mostly alone with her dog and rides in her area near home. Be advised that she just happens to be one of those riders that does not know when to quit and you have to act like you are dying to make her turn back home. I had to do that with her one time because we were lost up in the mountains. The horses knew the way back, but I wanted to get back before dark and my knees hurt! Bettye is more at home on her horse than she is in

the kitchen, yet she makes a mean home grown rhubarb pie. What an interesting life she has had then and has now, even having had both her knees replaced, she's still going strong. Age is relative.

Wally Becker was born January 12, 1930 surrounded by horses. No! not in the barn, but on the kitchen table. He was born and raised in Wilsall MT where the family homestead still exists. Many years ago Chick and I, with his wife Carol, rode our horses to his homestead, a two room log cabin which still stands with its dirt floor and newspapers for wallpaper. A small log building, the barn, still stands nearby. They did not have an outhouse. There never was access by road or lane to reach the homestead—even today. It is an isolated, quiet and lovely area. He tells of having to drive his younger siblings to school by wagon and crossing the Shields River. Of course they did not go to school when the freeze began. Wally finished the 8th grade and has a memory that can far surpass the most educated. He has a wealth of knowledge. His father raised and leased his horses therefore making Wally very horse savvy by having been given responsibility at a young age. As a kid of 7, with his younger brother 2 years younger, he would drive their father's horses to YNP for leasing. The two had to ride together in order to help one other get on their horses and open and shut gates, chores that could not be done alone at such a tender age, especially with a string of horses. These horses were tethered together by ropes tied to their tails and to their halters. The whole string held by 7 year old Wally and his lead horse with rope so heavy in his little hands. They would leave Wilsall, spend the night in Livingston, and head out the next day. The boys followed

charter member continued...

the railroad tracks along the Yellowstone River leading into the park. With this upbringing one can never question Wally's knowledge of horses. He has raised and trained his own horses, trained others, and trained and drove teams. Wally has had his own pack string and guided with many outfitters including the Rainbow Ranch and Lee Hart's Broken Heart Ranch. He sure knows his knots! Early on, in his working years while employed by the county, Wally was severely injured when a tree fell on him. He suffered a broken back and had his teeth knocked out. Wally spent weeks in the hospital and later required a back operation. Regardless, he rides and works on trails, gets off more often these days to walk with his horse, and his trail work is done on his hands and knee pads. But there is one thing you need to know about Wally if you ride with him, you will always feel safe and well cared for, but he just does not know when to stop and go home. Here again, you may have to act like you are dying to make him turn back towards home. Wally's fellow trail workers have to take away his tools so they all can go home. Just Beware.

Les Witmer is our other charter member, born during a blaze of fireworks on the fourth of July 1941 in the heart of the coal country in Pennsylvania. He says, "Mathematically speaking, I am of an age to retire, collect Medicare and receive my senior discounts, yet I wonder where the time went." He still works at his insurance company from home. He spent his other lifetime in the PA Mountains backpacking, hunting and fishing, "my passion", he says, "after my wife, Brenda, who rightly shares my charter membership." Les spent 10 years backpacking as a Boy Scout Leader doing 50 mile hikes, miles of canoe trips and all the other good scout outings that active boys do. Les, Brenda, with their daughter, Wendy, who at 11, moved to Montana in the winter of 1975 when Les transferred with the Prudential Insurance Co. Never having been involved with horses, he found them to be the mode of transportation in Montana. He and his family found another passion for the next 30 years plus. The family began to spend their summer weekends and the hunting seasons in the mountains with their horses. He feels sure that he has spent more time in the wilderness than most native born Montanans. With his backpacking experience, it was natural to pack light which prompted him to present the club's first light packing clinic. He helped to initiate our first steak ride. Brenda claims that he just wanted his rib eye steak cooked his way. Les also found that the forest access issues and its future trail use prompted him to get involved with starting the GVBCH. Back in 1980 he was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and he says, "It slowed me down somewhat." But, in 1994 he suffered a very serious attack leaving him with balance problems and fatigue and various other issues caused by his MS. The dizziness is a challenge for him to sit a horse. He still hunts with the help of his two friends, Paul Lambert and Paul, Jr., whose devotion to their friend helps him to keep active with his love of horses, hunting and fishing...they watch over him making sure that he is safe and with bullet proof horses. His favorite areas are the Bob Marshall and Cowboy Heaven. He claims fly fishing for West Slope Cutthroat in the Bob can give you the best fight. His life on horses has not been easy. Les suffered falls off steep ledges, falls down steep drops (stopped only by a tree and can't figure how the horse got back on the trail), and has been stomped on. Yet he comes back to ride, hunt, and fish. He has made all the approaches to the Bob except by the South approach at Lincoln. He and Brenda love to hunt antelope in Ekalaka and are able to use their ATV's. Since they cannot get in the backcountry by horse now, they are enjoying "continental camping" using their truck camper with all the amenities. Les is a very fortunate man in

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charter continued...

that, with his wonderful friends, he can still enjoy his love of the mountains. MS is not stopping him. No wonder he was born with flags flying and fireworks bursting. With all his issues, Les knows he is definitely a very lucky man and claims he is not ready to stop because there is much more for him to do in his life. He is an inspiration for us.

If you received a member application inserted—you have not paid your dues.

This is your last newsletter

GVBCH Board Meeting January 4, 2007

Officers and Directors in Attendance: Dan Marsh, Bob Steinman, Jim Albright, Dan Alderman, Rich Winget, Wally Becker, Dan Porter and Larry Thomas. Also in attendance were Rich Inman, Jan Elpel, Jiffy Hale, Chick Hale, Janice Cartwright and Bettye White.

Leadership Transition: Rich Inman thanked the officers and board members who served so strongly in 2006 and those who volunteered to do the same in 2007. He solicited volunteers to assist the 9-Mile Packers set up displays for the Sports Show on Friday, January 12. Rich Inman, Larry Thomas, Dan Marsh and Rich Winget volunteered. He turned the meeting over to President Dan Marsh.

Minutes: Board minutes of December 6, 2006, were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Bettye gave the Treasurer's Report. Account balances follow. Checking \$1,534.42; Petty Cash \$30.38; Money Market \$2,077.22; CD \$5,570.36; Total of Accounts \$9,212.38.

Membership: Jiffy advised that we currently have 40 paid members for the 2007 year so far. Bob Steinman volunteered to contact new members, welcome them and explain about the club. Jiffy encouraged all to solicit new members and asked for assistance in developing ideas for enlarging the club. Janice Cartwright and Rich Winget volunteered to assist.

Issues: Dan had prepared and submitted a written summary of the Gallatin Forrest Travel Plan issues affecting horsemen. It will be on the website.

The House version (HR 586) of the federal Right to Ride bill was passed by the House but died in the Senate. The Senate version, SB 781, is still in committee.

Communication: Letters were received from the Department of Agriculture and the US Forrest Service. The Forrest Service sent a CD version of the Travel Plan which was given to Dan Porter.

Newsletter: Jiffie solicited ideas and articles.

Trails: Chick suggested that the club research the reasons for certain trail closures to horses, and determine if we can fix the problem and restore access. We could also use the work as publicity for the club and as an element of the plan to recruit new members. Dan Marsh advised that the reasons for the closures are included in the report. Rich Inman advised that the District Ranger (Jose) has the authority to re-open trails if "just cause" is shown. Dan asked that members review the report and suggest trails closures that may fit this description and that have a high chance for success and advise him.

Christmas Party: 52 members of the CVBCH attended the party (37 pre-registered). The Saddle and Harness Club suggested that our club host the party next year.

Audit of 2006 Books: Rich Inman advises that the books were audited and only a five cent difference was discovered, and that was in the favor of the Treasurer. Rich Congratulated Bettye White for a job well done

Committee Chairs of 2007: Newsletter - Jiffie; Issues - Dan Marsh & Rich Inman; Membership - Jiffie; Trails - Chick. Publicity was added and merged with Communications. Chairs for Publicity/Communications and Programs were not filled. Volunteers will be solicited at the next general membership meeting.

New Business: Janice mentioned that she will not be able to attend the next general membership meeting but volunteered to organize a "Play Day" and to be the trail boss for the first ride of the year.

General membership meetings will continue to be held at the Belgrade Alliance Church on the 3rd Thursday of each month at

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Board meetings will be held on the 1st Thursday of each month at 7-9pm at a location yet to be determined. Options discussed included the following with the name of the individual volunteering to investigate and report. Bozeman Public Library (Dan Marsh); Belgrade Alliance Church (Rich Inman); Belgrade Senior Center; Bozeman Senior Center (Brenda); Belgrade Public Library (Bettye); Precision Fence (Jiffie).

Chapter Summary Reports of activities for 2006 must be completed and submitted to BCHMT. Dan Marsh volunteered and asked that pictures and information be forwarded to him. All chapter reports will be printed in a book.

BCHMT Convention will be held on March 30 to April 1, 2007, in Lewistown. Pre-registration is \$70; on-site is \$75. Registration forms are on the website. The club is looking for volunteers to act as delegates. Rich Inman is also building a new display and is looking for photos and suggestions. Please bring them to the February or March Board and General Membership meetings.

BCHMT is conducting a photo contest in four categories. Details can be found on their website (<http://www.bchmt.org/>). Janice won in one of the categories last year. Way to go girl!

Respectfully submitted by Rich Winget for Nancy Winget, sec.

BCH General Meeting Minutes January 18, 2007

Meeting called to order by President, Dan Marsh.

Minutes of the November 16th General Meeting as posted in the December newsletter were approved.

Treasurer's Report was given by Brenda Kessler. No bills were presented for payment.

Checking Account Balance January 4, 2007.....\$1534.42

Deposits

Jan 5 ...Dues.....\$220.00

Jan 17 Dues..... 150.00 \$370.00 \$1,904.42

Printing & Postage -\$126.00 Ending Balance \$ 1,778.42

Other Assets

Petty Cash.....\$30.38

Money Market.....\$2077.22

Certificate of Deposit.....\$5570.36 \$7,677.96 Grand Total

\$9,456.38

Correspondence:

*Information was received from Nine Mile Wilderness Training Center providing their 2007 schedule.

*Notification was received from Montana Secretary of State advising that the 2007 Annual Report must be filed by April 15th.

*The Gallatin Valley Forest Service sent a copy of their Trail Classification System . Chick will review the document.

*Letter from Merlyn Huso, chairman of the BCHA was discussed. The letter is requesting donations for a suit against the National Forest Service. A vote in favor of donating toward the suit was defeated. Dan Marsh and Rich Inman will draft a response for the club.

*Notification received from the Matthew Hanson Endowment requesting proposal for awards to be submitted by March 1st.

*Notification received that Gail Kimball will be the first female Chief of the Forest Service.

Membership: Jiffie addressed the need for brochures for new members. Rich Inman will chair a committee to draft. Rich Inman suggested the club host a new member drive and pot luck dinner.

Publicity: Maggie Goertz volunteered to chair the committee. Dan Marsh will order 20-30 stickers to be used on horse trailers, trucks, etc. Cost of the stickers is \$3.00 each. Brochures are available via the BCH website.

Newsletter: Jiffie requested that members submit articles or ideas to her. She suggested that vets and horse trainers are often good sources of articles.

Trails: Chick expressed concern that up to 12 trails will be closed to horses this year. He will contact members that were not in attendance at the meeting to address the need for trail work

Christmas Party: Janice was unable to attend the meeting, however the group consensus was that the party was enjoyable. Dan Marsh will write a thank you note to the Saddle and Harness Club, and asking that the 2007 party also be a joint party.

New Business: The Wild West Winterfest will be held February 16- 18. Brochures were provided.

Board Meetings will be held at Dan Porter's office, 1941 W. Main the first Thursday of each month at 7 P.M. Thanks to Dan for offering his office!

The club needs a volunteer for Program Director - please e-mail Dan Marsh if you are interested in the position.

2007 Event Schedule was drafted. Meeting adjourned at 9:15

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Winget, sec.

Just when I was getting used to yesterday, along came today

Barefooted Horses by Ron Stuber*Article submitted with author's permission*

Young horses are better to leave unshod to allow the foot to grow and develop in a natural wear or conformation. Any barefooted horse needs to be trimmed periodically to correct any defects or malgrowth developments so as to be more comfortable and functional. The wall in the adult horse, as well as the young horse, should be longer than the sole so as to touch the ground before the sole does. The wall should also be rounded on the edge to prevent chipping and breaking off of the outer surface. The sole flakes away naturally, so there is no need to pare that away in most situations. Compare this to your fingernails, if clipped down "to the quick," the tips of your fingers are sore and can't withstand pressure, but if your nails aren't too short, your fingers are comfortable and functional. The frog also only requires a minimal amount to be trimmed off. How much again depends on the condition and conformation of the foot. The frog should not be the first structure to hit the ground, but enough of the frog, cleft, and sulcus needs to be addressed to not encourage thrush to develop.

When first removing shoes for the winter, as an example, remove the shoes after the horse has at least six weeks of growth. This way the foot is a little long to allow for wear. Leave the frog and sole alone as much as possible, and rasp the edges to prevent cracking. The foot wall will be a little weaker until the nail holes have grown out. It takes about two to three months for the feet to adjust to being barefooted. If the horse is "ouchy" or flinches when barefooted, either he has been trimmed too short, or his soles are yet too soft and tender to withstand the pressure especially on a gravel surface. If this occurs, you need to assess the trimming technique or keep him on a soft environment until his soles toughen up. You can paint certain preparations on the soles to harden them, such as turpentine, phenol, formaline, iodine, or tincture of benzoin. You may even need to apply easy boots for him to wear.

If your horse has lameness issues or other problems, it may be wiser to leave him shod so as not to aggravate or promote the pre-existing condition. Also, if the hoof wears down faster than it grows, then you are going to have to have the horse shod or alter the conditions that lead to the excessive hoof wear.

Candidates for going barefooted are:

1. Have sound, normal hooves.
2. Have reasonably good conformation.
3. Live and work on the same surfaces. If a horse is stalled most of the time and is expected to work an hour a day on hard terrain, he probably is not going to do well. On the other hand, if he has been living in a hard packed dirt paddock, he will probably be sound on hard terrain.

Unlikely candidates for barefootedness:

1. Poor conformation such as severe anterior/posterior imbalance or medial/lateral imbalance. Other examples are angular limb deformities, navicular problems, and the foundered foot.
2. Working primarily on hard surfaces.
3. Working on different surfaces than their bedding.

There are always exceptions to the rules why horses can't tolerate going barefooted, and these may be genetic and other unknown factors. Thick walls and tick soles are a definite advantage for barefootedness. Every horse is an individual, and his feet must be treated accordingly. Just as with feeding horses - some are easy keepers and some need more nutrition to sustain body weight - so it is with the barefooted horse. Have your veterinarian and, especially, your farrier examine the horse and give you advice on whether he should be barefooted or shod. They may see a problem of which you are not aware. Also, wait until your "off season" before removing shoes; that way, he will have time to adjust, but be prepared to decrease his training for awhile.

Some other concerns need to be considered. Some horses need to be trimmed every three to five weeks because you can't take as much hoof wall off at one time or the horse will become lame after removing the shoes. Therefore, don't think your horse doesn't need hoof care from November (or when you remove the shoes) until April or May when you have them put back on. The important thing to remember is the foot needs to be left a little longer and must maintain its concavity. Hoof growth varies with seasons, terrain, nutrition, and moisture. Again, many horses will have trouble in the winter on uneven, frozen ground. Wet springs and dry summers all affect feet and soundness or unsoundness whether the horse is shod or barefoot. If wear exceeds growth, it will be necessary to keep the horse shod or wear some type of easy boot. Signs that your horse is beginning to react to too much wear or ground injury include: unwillingness to move out, "tender footed" or lameness, changes in the way of going, etc.

Lastly, if not shod or trimmed properly, permanent problems may result. An example of this is the very common "underrun heels" (low heel, long toe syndrome) which threaten the sensitive foot structures, and can produce corns or bruises, torn or injured frogs, stress and strain on tendons and ligaments, and predisposes the feet to navicular problems, and a host of other issues. When you remove the shoes, you will be changing the hoof angle which may also affect the horse's gait, hoof structure, and function. All these issues need to be taken into consideration along with some that I have not even mentioned. Consult your veterinarian and, most importantly, your farrier for advice, shoeing and trimming schedule, and special or corrective techniques that will be required by your horse's feet.

GALLATIN VALLEY BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN ARE INDEBTTED TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES AND MEMBERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR 2006 POKER RIDE. Please patronize:

Ag Depot
All West Veterinary
Ardesson Boots and Shoes
Barrett Enterprises
Big Sky RV
Bozeman Saddle Outlet
Bridger Feeds
Century 21 – Dan Porter
Chalet Market
Cindy deBethizy Art
Coles's Custom Saddles
Concrete Construction
DJ Bar Ranch Stud Service
Don Funke Divine Equine
Double Diamond Halters
Freeway Enterprises
Gourmet Gas Station
Huft Custom Leather
It Sew Happens

Kountry Korner Café
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Precision Fence Systems
Quilting in the Country
R.O. Brooks and Carter's Boots
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Schnee's Boots & Shoes
Shear West
Steele Halters
True Value Hardware – Belgrade

Your Friend's Happiness – S. Hanan
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Cindy deBethizy
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Dick & Barbara Haines
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Laura Hanks
John & Joyelln Howell
Rich Inman
Beth Merrick
Jane Shields
Bob Steinman
Connie Wallace
George Zanck

Gallatin Valley Backcountry Horsemen

P.O. Box 3232

Bozeman MT 59772-3232

