



PONDEROSA

Back Country Horsemen of Washington
We Get it Done !

December 2020 & January 2021



<http://pbchw.com>



FAN LAKE
DECEMBER 2020

CALENDAR

All event dates subject to change or cancellation: Watch facebook and the PON3 emails.

Virtual BCHW meeting on December 12. See more details below.

Tentative PBCH meeting on January 5, 2021; possibly via Zoom. Stay tuned! Watch Pon3 and the facebook page.

Remember that Tom has calendars, Riverside State Park trail maps, and scavenger hunt T-shirts all for \$10 each for those last minute Christmas gifts!

Contact Tom at: tjbirge@msn.com

Photo by Tom, of Diana and Michelle on their golden horses in the golden light



From BCHW:

Please join us on Saturday, December 12 at 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. for the BCHW General Membership Virtual Gathering. This **is not** an official meeting.

We are excited to have some special guest speakers. See agenda below for details.

This virtual social requires you to register by 12/9 with Zoom prior to the event. You can do this by clicking on the below link.

You can find out information about how to download the desktop client or mobile app by clicking each of the below links.

Note: Participants joining meetings with registration must use the Zoom [desktop client](#) or [mobile app](#). They will not be able to join using the [web client](#).

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Dec 12, 2020 02:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvd-6uqj8rE9FUjMlfru3lrjD4iRuAubpW>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Prior to the start of the BCHW General Membership Virtual Gathering, the Zoom Admin will be logged on starting at 1:30 p.m.

If you would like to test out your equipment (desktop or mobile device) prior to the day of the social, please contact Tina Short (secretary@bchw.org).

BCHW General Membership Virtual Zoom Gathering

December 12th, 2020

2 to 4 p.m.

Agenda:

- **Introduction** (Jason Ridlon) – 10 minutes
- **Keynote Speakers:**
 - Public Lands Chair (Kathy Young) - 15 minutes
 - Legislative Chair (Mitzi Schindele) - 15 minutes
 - Grants/Events Independent Contractor (Jen Bond) - 15 minutes
 - BCHA Update (Darrell Wallace) – 15 minutes
 - Publicity Team Updates on Website/Social Media/etc. – 5 minutes
- **2020 Accomplishments and 2021 Planning** (Jason Ridlon) – 25 minutes
- **Questions/Answers** – 20 minutes

Adjourn 4 p.m.

Note: *Zoom Pre-Registration is required to attend the virtual session.

For questions, please contact secretary@bchw.org

The Winter of our Discontent

As I think of this newsletter for the winter of 2020, that phrase comes to mind: “The winter of our Discontent”. No idea how that popped into my brain. Turns out this was a John Steinbeck novel. Who knew? I will have to find it, because it’s winter, and I have time to read.

While this will be a long winter, we and our horses will make the best of it. As we always do. In early December, I sit here at the dining room table thinking of Christmas presents. What is a gift or necessity that makes our winter horsey lives easier?

Gloves. Gloves make life easier. Buy everyone on your list some gloves. And cookies. You can never go wrong with cookies. Or fudge.

And with visions of sugarplums and cookies and fudge dancing in our heads, off we go to the newsletter.

Michelle,

PBCH Newsletter Editor



BCH Membership Renewal

By Ken Carmichael

It is time to renew our BCH memberships. If you have not done this, please do it now. It is a simple process no matter which way you choose to do it. You can:

- Go online at www.BCHW.ORG
- Print the application attached to this newsletter, mail it and a check to the PBCH Treasurer
- Call me and I will mail you an application to complete

BCH continues to do great work keeping trails open for equestrians. We want to be part of this work. There are statewide work parties supported by BCHW. At Ponderosa BCH in 2021 we will continue work on the obstacle course at Riverside State Park and we are working hard to improve the equestrian camping at BLM Escure Ranch. Depending on the Corona Virus restrictions we plan to have the poker ride.

Above all we enjoy riding on the public land. We will plan several group rides. And our Education committee is planning events for the meetings and other venues.

Do not miss out. Plan now and renew your membership.

We are sending the the PBCH membership application along with this newsletter.

We put together this calendar for some planned events. Of course, right now everything is subject to change, but it gives us a start. If you have any suggestions or comments, let Tom know. All input is welcome. Contact tjbirge@msn.com

[Note from Editor: Yes, I know this was in the November newsletter, but I'm keeping it so we can think of the fun times in the future].

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
PONDEROSA BCHW
For 2021

NOTE : There are several work parties to be scheduled

JANUARY:

5TH - Membership meeting

Program:

FEBRUARY:

2nd - Membership meeting

Program:

28th Volunteer hours

28th BCHW calendar pictures due

MARCH:

2nd- Membership meeting

Program:

BCHW Rendezvous Ellensburg ?

APRIL:

6th - Membership meeting

Program:

9th -11th Ladies campout Ancient Lakes

MAY:

4th- Membership meet

Program:

31st volunteer hours

Someone Host a Ride!!!!

JUNE:

1st – Membership meeting

Program:

Someone Host a Ride!!!!

JULY:

6th – Membership meeting

Open House/Poker ride rehearsal

10th-11th Open House/Poker ride

31st – Volunteer Hours

Someone Host a Ride!!!!

AUGUST:

3rd - Membership meeting

Program - Location -

Someone Host a Ride!!!!

SEPTEMBER:

7th - Membership meeting

Program:

10th – Volunteer Hours preliminary hours

30TH – Volunteer hours final report due

OCTOBER:

1st weekend Escure Ride

5th - Membership meeting – Elections

Program:

30th – BCHW Wine Ride at Zillah

NOVEMBER:

2nd - Membership meeting

Program -

DECEMBER:

7th - Membership meeting

Catered Christmas dinner ??

Go to bchw.org for additional events.

Ponderosa Anniversary

By Ken Carmichael

On December 5, 2015 the BCHW Board approved the charter of the Ponderosa chapter. This was just the start of the newest chapter of BCHW to join the challenge of keeping trails open for equestrians.

Beginning in May 2015 several of us recognized the need for a new group in Spokane. Conversations about the formation of a new chapter began to grow as more people expressed interest. Several meetings were held to talk about what we wanted to achieve. 20 people met on September 5, 2015 and a set of Principles were developed for the chapter. Today there are 44 members. Thank you to all those that have worked hard toward our goals. We look forward to many more years.

PONDEROSA CHAPTER OF BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF WASHINGTON

PRINCIPLES

September 5, 2015

MISSION STATEMENT

Taken from bylaws (required by BCHW)

The mission of this organization shall be:

- 1. To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness.**
- 2. To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.**
- 3. To assist the various governmental and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.**
- 4. To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.**
- 5. To foster and encourage new members in PBCH and BCHW**

MISSION SUMMARY

To preserve and enhance the rights of responsible horsemen to use horses and mules on public land.

STRATEGIES

- All chapter members participate and contribute to the mission
- Provide meaningful resources to the land managers
- Influence decision makers and public
- Practice and communicate the Leave No Trace Principles

VISION

Back Country Horsemen continues as a premier resource focused on keeping trails and related facilities open for equestrians.

HOW

Maintain a viable non-profit organization where all chapter members participate and contribute in one or more of the following: work parties, education, advocacy and/or supporting activities.

Concentrate and direct the energy of a small, cohesive group towards the common priority of accomplishing the BCH mission. This will provide an efficient, responsive and effective BCH chapter working for the benefit of the equestrian community.

MAINTAINING TRAILS WHEN MUDDY

By Ken Carmichael

Recently I was one of many recipients of an email from Paul Knowles of Spokane County Parks. In part what it said was:

“We have a huge favor to ask of you! Would you mind putting out to your organizations’ members through your social media or other avenues a reminder that Spokane County’ trails are closed when muddy? We’ve been experiencing some spring-like freeze and thaw conditions, which can cause some of our trails to be more prone to damage by trail use than others, in particular:

- Any location where we have newer trails
- Areas where soils and exposure make them more susceptible to freeze/thaw.

We really appreciate your help in preserving and protecting the significant investment in volunteer hours needed each year to build and maintain Spokane County’s trails.”

When I read this, I realized that this applies to all our lands, thus this general plea going out across our state. This applies on all our lands, city, county, state, federal and private. Let’s apply Paul’s ask of a “huge favor” to everywhere we are on the land.

Last year several recreational groups were asked to provide input to a county signage program. Through this cooperation the following sign was created. I think it applies beyond the county so will quote here:

“Trails Closed When Muddy. During periods of rain and spring thaw, use of these trails leaves deep tire ruts, hoof and footprints resulting in severe or permanent trail damage. Spokane County relies heavily on community volunteers to build and maintain these trails for YOU to enjoy. PLEASE, help us thank our volunteers by choosing to recreate when the conditions are right. If you are leaving a visible tire rut, hoof or footprint more than 1” deep, the trails are too muddy to use.”

Back Country Horsemen is one of many groups that work to keep our trails open for multiple users and we fully support Paul. Therefore, the plea goes out to everyone to be conscious of the impact we can have on wet and muddy trails.

In 2020 we have seen a significant increase in the number of people using our public lands, and specifically the trails. Some of these people may not be aware of the affect they are having. Education can be a part of preserving our trails. If you are on a trail and look back to see imprints you are making it is a good time to select another trail, or time to recreate.

We can all do our part in maintaining our trails, even if you are not using a shovel. If you want to help further with trail maintenance and construction, please contact your local Back Country Horsemen chapter.

Inland NW Land Conservancy

By Ken Carmichael

On December 8th, the Inland NW Land Conservancy held a virtual meeting. Unfortunately, it conflicted with a Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park meeting I had to attend. While Zoom is great there are still conflicts. The INLC did record the meeting and I was able to listen later.

I just want to express my support, admiration and encouragement to the Inland NW Land Conservancy. They are doing an outstanding job of protecting land in this area. One of these is the Rimrock to Riverside State Park project. I believe that BCH should be in full support of their work.

Also, congratulations to Paul Knowles of the Spokane County Parks. He was awarded the Conservation Hero award at the meeting. Paul does great work and BCH enjoys working with him on trail issues in county parks.

I encourage everyone to watch for information about the Land Conservancy and give it your full support.

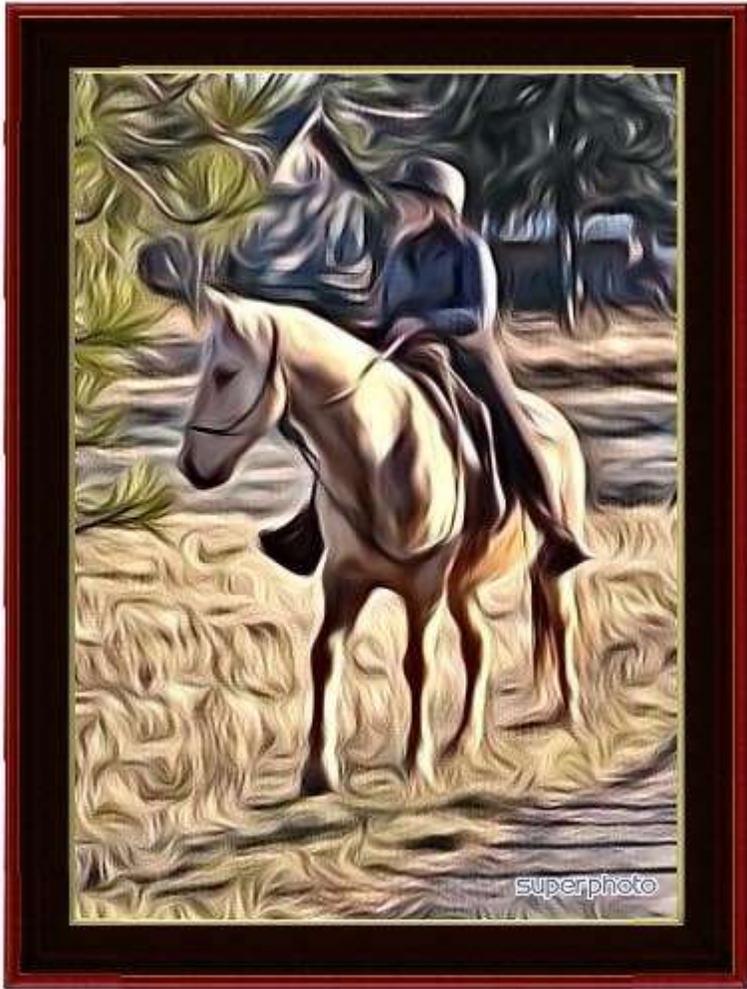


For more information go to: <https://www.inlandnwland.org/>

Things to do when the weather sucks

By Michelle Eames

- ❖ Play on facebook, and figure out how to do cool artsy effects like Dianna Birge did here:



- ❖ Paint by numbers.
- ❖ Practice tying your horse, and asking him to stand ground-tied.
- ❖ Shovel and call it aerobic exercise: manure, snow, it all counts!
- ❖ Set up highline and practice tying.
- ❖ Do a jig saw puzzle!
- ❖ Catch the mice in the barn. Carve notches in the barn-broom handle for every mouse caught.
- ❖ Buy a new barn broom after handle gets whittled away.
- ❖ Read some horse books. Or a murder mystery. Better yet, a murder mystery set in the horse world. Here is a winter reading list from Horse Illustrated and (...drum roll....) it includes some murder mysteries!!!
 - <https://www.horseillustrated.com/winter-reading-list-of-horse-books>
 - Actually, there are some fun and interesting books on that list. I plan to read some!

Escure Ranch

By Ken Carmichael

Improving the equestrian facilities at the Escure Ranch is the next big project for Ponderosa BCH. We are well into the planning stage.

I have written a draft proposal to BLM which they have accepted in principle. Nothing official. Steve Smith of BLM and I met at the Escure Ranch on December 1 to review the project. All went well. We are proposing 8 new corrals, 3 tables and 2 fire rings in the equestrian portion of the campground. Several factors were considered. Fire rings need to be in a safe zone away from tall brush. A major consideration was leaving enough open space where people can camp in groups or as individuals. This meant putting corrals and tables along the edge of the camping area. We feel this provides the greatest flexibility.

For financing the project, we are looking for help. BLM is showing interest in helping by offering a 50% match on all material costs. I have contacted the BCHW Grant Administrator and PBCH member Linda White is looking into some resources. Since Escure Ranch is popular for people across the state we will also be contacting other BCH chapters. Other fundraising tools will also be used. We will need your help in managing those. I can provide pictures, diagrams and facts to support fundraising. Your ideas are welcome.

Everyone should read the article in the November/December BCHW Trailhead News newsletter. The cover picture is at Wall Lake and the article is on page 13.

The Escure Ranch is a great place to camp and ride. We have a good start on the facilities with the current corrals, highline, plenty of camping area, restroom and manure bunker. There is about 20 square miles of great riding. Plus, we have a willing partner in BLM.

This is just one project that Ponderosa can work with. We have a committee working on the obstacle course at Riverside State Park as well. But we need to think long term. These projects can take years to put together. Where else do we want to put our efforts?



Photo (not of Escure) and info from Bureau of Land Management website: <https://www.blm.gov/oregon-washington>

BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON

The Pacific Northwest has 16.1 million acres of public lands that unfold into a rich tapestry of diverse landscapes, starting where the mighty Columbia River crosses into northeastern Washington from Canada and ending at the lush headwaters of the Chetco River near California.

Bikes in Wilderness

By Ken Carmichael

I received the following information in November but did not put it out by email as it does not require any action by our chapter. However, I think it is important for our membership to be aware of these issues.

Senator Lee (R_UT) is proposing a bill concerning the use of bikes in the Wilderness. The summary is:

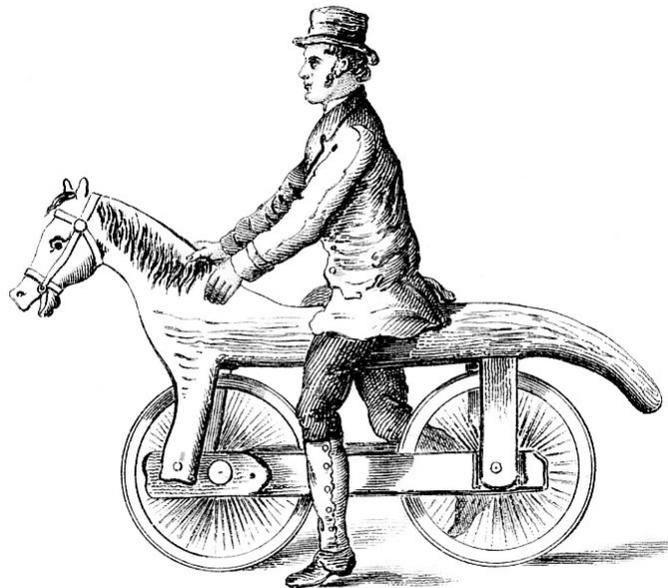
“Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act

This bill requires the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to authorize their respective local offices to determine all permissible forms of nonmotorized travel over routes within wilderness areas.

Local offices must seek to accommodate all forms of nonmotorized travel to the maximum extent practicable. If a local office fails to make such a determination about a route within two years after this bill's enactment, then any form of nonmotorized travel shall be allowable on that route.”

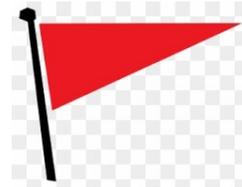
Back Country Horsemen opposes this bill but does not think it will go forward. There are zero co-sponsors and there is not a companion bill in the House. However, BCH is drafting a letter of opposition to be on the record. This is just another way where BCH at the national and state level are protecting the rights of equestrians. Your support as a member of BCH is appreciated.

Clipart-library.com



Desensitizing Your Horse

By Linda White



We've all seen people waving flags around their horses to "desensitize" them. Why are they doing this? Oxford dictionary defines desensitize as "make less sensitive". Why would we want to make our horses less sensitive? Don't we want them soft and moving off the lightest leg or hand? Sensitive means to be quick to detect or respond to slight changes, signals, or influences.

There are many benefits of desensitization. It teaches the horse to relax and not respond to stimuli. It builds confidence in the horse and in your relationship with the horse. Desensitizing ramps up pressure for the horse and teaches him to calm down quickly when the pressure is released. It is another way to show leadership to the horse and have your horse learn to trust you and not overreact to new or strange things.

You can desensitize your horse to anything: flags, tarps, spray bottles, clothing, ropes, clippers, noises, really any object you can think up.

How do we do desensitization? Have your horse in a halter and lead rope in an open area. Start with making sure you can touch your horse anywhere on their body. Once your horse is comfortable with your touch and contact, then move on to desensitizing them to objects. The first object I recommend starting with is your training tool, perhaps a flag or lead rope. We don't want them to be afraid of these items, we want our horse to respect them.

Allow the horse to see and smell the item. Then move it around in the air, slowly moving closer to the horse as they can tolerate it. If they start moving away, move with them until their feet stop and relaxation occurs. When a horse relaxes he will let out his breath; cock a hoof; lick his lips; or lower his head. Relaxation is different than toleration. Horses will often tolerate something rather than relax into it. Once the horse relaxes, remove the stimulus and praise. It is important to time your response to his relaxation so he can realize that the stimuli was removed because he relaxed. You will have to pay close attention because the relaxation cues can be subtle.

After the horse is comfortable with the item near him, start touching the horse with the item at the shoulder and slowly start rubbing it on the horse. Again, look for relaxation. Then praise and remove the stimulus. Repeat on both sides. Horses have two blind spots: directly behind them and underneath their head. Desensitization should include these areas.

Never perform desensitization with your horse tied. If they get afraid or uncomfortable, they will need to move their feet. If they can't move their feet they will react in different ways such as kicking, rearing or biting. We want the horse to engage his thinking brain not his reactive brain during these training sessions.

It is always important to stop on a positive note so the horse associates the desensitizing as a calm and positive experience.

The possibilities are endless. The more you do, the calmer your horse will be. Spending as little as 10 minutes a day can be beneficial.

Winter Activities

By Ken Carmichael

What should we do with these cold, wet, cloudy days? Well, so far I have not had to worry about that as I am still riding. However, it is bound to come so it is time to plan.

Basically, it is time to clean saddles and tack, clean the house, do the taxes and watch the super bowl. That is all a good plan. But a little more detail is in order for part of this plan.

I take the battery and first aid supplies out of the trailer. The battery is put up on wood in the basement.

Cleaning the saddles and tack is a major project here. I tear down the saddles, wash them, oil them twice and put them back together. That is about 4 days per saddle. It is best not to do more than one at a time so I do not mix up the parts, and the laundry room is just so big.

While cleaning the tack it is a good time to look it over carefully. Winter is a better time to get the repairs done than in the spring when I am itching to get riding. Or worse yet, have equipment failure while I am on a ride.

Another chore is to review the items in each of the first aid kits and replace or replenish supplies. Some of my winter reading includes my first aid notes and books.

When corona virus allows, we will get back to PBCH, and other, meetings. A time to socialize, have education and organize events.

It is not a time to neglect our faithful friends out in the pasture. They still need our attention. Brushing, cleaning hoofs, feeding, clean water and an occasional treat is a good idea. Are you on schedule with your worming program?

Finally, it is a good time to make the LIST. This is the list for the next riding season. It is time to review all day trips and camping trip locations and figure out how we will get to all of them. We are also planning fun work parties that will make the riding season even better.

So do not pass up this important time of year where we get ready for the next riding season.

Saddles for the Hard-to-Fit Horse

An Article Summary by Michelle Eames

I saw this great article that folks might find interesting on the Equus Magazine website:

“**Saddles for the Hard-to-Fit Horse**” that describes how how to choose the right saddle for three equine body types that are especially difficult to fit.

Here is the link:

https://equusmagazine.com/riding/saddles-hard-fit-horse-12920?fbclid=IwAR3iPB_IdXRN9h2M9oi-zlKE_PdUVG6CqEjctFFDDmdo1kKFbB26RJxquCY

The article describes the saddle tree, how it is made of “bars” and how trees vary in distance between the bars, the angle of the bars, the flare in the front, and the “rock” or curve in the bars from front to back. The goal is to have the tree match the contours of the horses back.

Then the article walks through three hard-to-fit horse types, including:

- ❖ The mutton-withered, broad-backed horse
- ❖ The high-withered horse
- ❖ The in-between or immature horses

The article discusses brands of saddles that often work for those types of horses.

I am always trying to understand saddle fit and develop knowledge about saddles. The article was fairly detailed and too long to copy, but I will be referring to it again and I recommend you take a look. I seem to always have a hard-to-fit horse, and have gone through many saddles over time. Once again this Fall I noticed white hairs behind my horse’s withers, telling me something is wrong with the fit, and I am continuing on my seemingly never-ending saddle fitting journey.



Oly the Elder, and Michelle's mom dressed as "Winter".



Vali the Younger, and Michelle, dressed as "Summer".



We regret to inform you that we did not win the BCHW virtual winery ride costume contest. We did, however, have a fun couple hours on a sunny winter day figuring out costumes from whatever we had in the house.

Winter Trail Ride

By Cindy Miller

I drove away from bare roads in Cheneyland one early morning last week to ride North near Fan Lake. I wasn't prepared mentally for icy patches of country roads near Eloika Lake. The truck had amazing snow tires but was pulling a trailer with two horses, and going down those hills gave me a fright. I did refrain from braking suddenly and found a few areas of gravel on the side to slow me down. When we pulled into the trailhead parking and unloaded the horses, the look on Tanner's sorrel face was one of bewilderment since only snow surrounded the trailer. 'You've got to be kidding me,' he moaned; he did a lot of moaning on that ride. Most of the trails were snowy, with some areas that were deep, mud underneath, including areas where Tanner broke through crusty hidden ice. Both horses were paying attention to their feet, we traveled cautiously, and the ride proved to be enjoyable. Tanner seemed to sense sudden moves were not allowed, and he was amazingly calm and focused. Of course, there were no signs of moose, or other monsters of the forest that day. It was eerily quiet and beautiful. On the way back home, the temperatures had risen, making for safer hauling conditions. I was pleased at how well my horse handled the poor trail conditions and kept me safe. He's a good trail horse!



From the Editor:

I invite you all to continue to send me your stories, tips, jokes, articles, photos, words of wisdom, or whatever. I especially would like to encourage our officers and committee chairs to share their thoughts, visions and projects. The goal here is to make the newsletter fun, entertaining and informative.

Michelle Eames, Newsletter Editor

P.S. Please send me photos of you and your equine buddy so I can highlight you in our newsletter! Introduce yourself to the new members with background on you or your horse!

PBCH Officers

PRESIDENT	TOM BIRGE
SECRETARY	PATTY WRIGHT
TREASURER	DIANA BIRGE
STATE DIRECTOR	KEN CARMICHAEL