

'Wasp trot' gets best of horse, rider

PENINSULA HORSEPLAY

Karen Griffiths



learned when someone yelled, "Bees," they were to break into a "wasp trot" to get away from area.

Sadly, several horses and

riders got stung during the day.

The ride was mostly uphill.

After a few hours, Indy was drenched in sweat, causing his cinch to loosen.

At one point, he stopped on the trail to use his teeth in an angry attempt to remove something irritating his left front ankle.

As he did, I attempted to center the saddle on his back.

I had a feeling I should get off to tighten his cinch.

I ignored it.

After a few hours in the saddle, my body was starting to ache.

I didn't feel like getting off to tighten his cinch.

Then Cheryl Acorn came up behind me on her horse and mentioned how crooked my saddle was.

"Yeah, I better get off to tighten his cinch," I groaned.

With Indy at a standstill I was about to dismount.

Then someone from behind yelled, "Bees!" Indy tried to jump into a trot.

My attempt to keep Indy standing still only resulted in him circling.

His sharp turns to the right caused the loose saddle to slide to his side.

Indy did a little crow-hop, and I found myself flat on my backside.

When I heard Indy scrambling on rocks to stay upright, I lifted my head up just in time to see him lose his footing.

I flattened my body out as much as possible, trying to make myself as one with the Earth while I watched his body tumble down on me.

In the past, a friend accused me of spoiling

A FEW WEEKENDS ago I ventured out on a trail ride with my horse, Indy, or as he's now affectionately called, Indy 500, after bucking me off and racing around an arena a couple months ago.

My friend, Zorina "Z" Barker, and I accompanied members of the Peninsula Chapter's Backcountry Horsemen on a striking 12-mile ride along and through the Bogachiel River south of Forks.

On our first of several river crossings, one rider dismounted in an attempt to lead her balking horse across the river.

I don't think she realized how difficult and slow her crossing would be while maneuvering over the slippery moss-covered river rocks.

It didn't take long before her horse grew impatient and began dragging her up river while she doggedly held on to a rein.

No one wants to chance letting their horse loose on a trail.

The horse might run off. In this instance, the rider had to let go and the horse trotted along up the river a bit.

Apparently, he wasn't having much fun without dragging his master behind him, so he stopped and went back to inspect his drenched master.

Was it just my imagination, or was he standing there laughing at his owner?

The group continued meandering up the narrow trail covered with a canopy of gorgeous, moss covered trees.

"I can't believe how beautiful this area is, and how privileged we are to be able to experience this," I said to Kat Sample.

She agreed.

The rainforest is stunning.

The downside is the region's damp, shady trails are also home to a large array of flying insects — including mosquitoes and wasps.

For some reason, wasps like to build area their nests under the trail's dirt.

The horses quickly



KAREN GRIFFITHS/PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

Backcountry Horsemen member Larry Baysinger leads a trail ride through Olympic National Park in July. The trail wove through moss-covered trees and ferns and included several crossings through the Bogachiel River.

Indy, and turning him into a mama's boy.

I guess he was right, because as I lay on the ground for a second, I was cradling my boy in my arms.

Yep, my 16-hand, 1,600-pound horse fell on me.

Later I joked I had told my boy to, "come here for a hug from mama."

As he stood up I felt Indy's metal shoe graze my right ankle.

I heard voices telling me not to move or get up, but I sat up anyway.

I heard Larry Baysinger ask if I wanted to be airlifted out.

"No, I'm OK, just sore."

I have to thank Cheryl Acorn for holding Indy while I re-saddled and helping me find a stump to climb back in the saddle.

It wasn't long before we reached the river again and someone suggested it was a good place to stop for lunch, and then turn around for home.

During the ride back, Z and I stayed way back behind the others.

I was starting to hurt, so I needed to avoid any "wasp trots" and keep Indy walking a slow pace, which he did.

I think he was a bit sore after the fall, too.

At the final river crossing, we were surprised to see Larry washing down his horse, which was soaking wet and standing still with his head down.

Turns out while crossing, the two stumbled into some sort of sand bog and the horse had fallen in head first. Larry was busy as a bee trying to wash sand out of the horse's nose, mouth, ears and eyes.

As for Z and me, we were the last to arrive back at the horse trailers.

While Z volunteered to take care of both horses I collapsed in the back of my truck and tried to kick my boots off.

With a last big tug, I found myself looking down at a huge swollen ankle that had already turned beautiful shades of blue.

Other than a slight frac-

ture in my right ankle, and a slather of bruises, I consider myself fortunate to have come out relatively unharmed and ready to ride again.

Although, on second thought, I think I'll wait a few weeks more before I swing my overweight, middle-aged leg over Indy 500's back again.

Events

■ Aug. 16, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mini Beats play day at Freedom Farms. Young ones learn balance and confidence through horse games. Located at 493 Spring Road, Port Angeles. Phone 360 457 4897 or e-mail freedomf@olympen.com.

■ Aug. 20 to 23, Clallam County Fair.

■ Aug. 29, 30, Peninsula Junior Rodeo at Clallam County Fairgrounds. Contact Jamie at 360-452-8491.

■ OPZ performance show at Baker Stables on Sept. 6 is canceled.

For more information,

phone 360-457-6039 or e-mail bakerstablespa@gmail.com.

■ Oct. 25, Baker Stables, 164 Four Winds Road in Port Angeles, first schooling show of the season, plus the costume class.

Visit www.bakerstablespa.net.

■ Backcountry Horsemen Peninsula Chapter meetings are held the 4th Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at Clallam County Fairgrounds kitchen.

Contact Marc Reinertson at almostaranch@olympus.net.

■ BCH Buckhorn Range Chapter meetings are held the second Thursday of the month.

Contact Bob Hoyle at 360-531-2337.

Karen Griffiths' column, Peninsula Horseplay, appears every other Wednesday.

If you have a horse event, clinic or seminar you would like listed, please e-mail Griffiths at horseplay.kbg@olympus.net at least two weeks in advance. You can also write Griffiths at PDN, P.O. Box 1330, Port Angeles, WA 98362.