



KAREN GRIFFITHS/PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

Backcountry Horsemen Peninsula Chapter members, visitors and non-riders gather at the Littleton Horse Camp in the Sol Duc Valley for a barbecue, silent auction and music by Rose and Dave Secord after the organization's annual Mount Mueller trail ride

Club ride turns into community event

LAST MONTH, I accompanied my friend **Z Barker** on an official Backcountry Horsemen trail ride to the top of Mount Muller.

This was my third ride to the top. For those adventurers who have never been, this is one destination you must add to your list of places to go.

The adventure started when I arrived at Littleton Horse Camp where I got ready for the 10 a.m. ride-out.

I had never seen so many horse trailers, horses and people gather for a local chapter ride.

Several had arrived the previous day and were there for a weekend of camping.

Backcountry Horseman **Marc Reinertson** later told me at the evening's barbecue they had "40 riders, plus 20 visitors, family and other non-riders."

"We even had some people that had just come out for a ride, ran into the crowd, joined in and became new members."

Littleton Horse Camp was built by the Backcountry Horsemen for everyone's use.

There was plenty of parking and camping spots,

PENINSULA HORSEPLAY

Karen Griffiths



several hitching posts, a large picnic area and even a clean outhouse.

Riders had numerous trails to choose from.

Several of us chose to ride to the top, knowing in advance our horses needed to be in good shape because the 13-mile loop trail is strenuous.

The first three miles from the lush valley trailhead has an uphill climb of 2,200 feet to Snider Ridge and is probably the most tiring.

At age 3, Z's horse was too young to be ridden the entire way. To avoid stressing or damaging the young horse's still growing body, she decided it best to get off and lead her horse most of the way.

Thankfully, she was already in good shape — Z was one of several Backcountry Horsemen who had spent hours the prior week removing fallen trees and fortifying the trail.

The next four miles across the ridge we rode past wildflower fields on our right and a thick grove of Douglas Fir on our left.

At times, the trail was narrow with what seemed like an ominous sharp drop to the south.

Most annoying were the holes on the trail dug by mountain beavers because they would collapse as the horse stepped down.

This was a potentially dangerous problem that could result in horse panicking or even breaking a leg.

Indy quickly learned to lower his head and look where to place his feet when I set my hand on his neck and said, "down."

Panoramic Point is 5.5 miles from the trailhead at 3,550 feet.

It's there you get the best panoramic view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Mount Olympus.

After that, the trail descends through moss-covered trees giving way to open spaces with giant rock formations before once again entering the valley's forested canopy.

Passing Rock House on our left we knew we were nearing the lower trail

back to the trailhead.

Rock House, which is literally a massive rock formation that's fun to explore, is where most of the riders who didn't want to take the strenuous ride to the top that day chose as their destination.

Referred to as "the low trail," it's a roughly four-mile trail through the woods from base camp to Rock House.

It was past Rock House that Z and I would occasionally come across a small strand of baling twine.

"I wonder if someone left the twine to warn us of wasp nests in the trail, but I don't see any," said Z.

Back at camp, we found out **Sherry Baysinger's** grandson got stung on the lower trail.

In response, Sherry took her can of wasp spray and made it her mission to get rid of several nests in hopes everyone else could have a safe and happy ride — which we did.

After the ride, we gathered with the group for a potluck dinner, guitar music by **Rose and Dave Secord**, a silent auction and Chicken Poop Bingo.

Proceeds from the event

went to trail tools, repairs and educational materials for the Leave No Trace educational program.

Events

■ Horse Day Camp at Chimacum Creek Farms. Sessions are Oct. 10, 11, 24 and Nov. 7, 8, 21. Contact Paula Stingle or Velda Thomas at Chimerk@embarqmail.com or 360-710-5812.

■ On Oct. 10 and 11 at 9 a.m., PSHA Game show at the Crosbys on Fransom Road in Port Angeles. Phone Tammy Hull at 360-640-0938.

■ On Oct. 10 at 9 a.m., Freedom Farms Horse Show and Play Day. Class fees at \$5 a horse. Phone 360-457-4897 for more information.

■ On Oct. 10 at 10 a.m., Horse Health Fair at Hartnagle Building Supply in Port Angeles.

■ On Oct. 11 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Colic Clinic at Freedom Farms. Cost is \$75, free if you've attended a colic drill in the past. Phone 360-457-4897 for more information.

■ On Oct 24 at 10 a.m., rideout for Backcountry Horsemen's Granny's Kitchen Ride.

■ On Oct. 25 at 9 a.m., schooling show with judge Kim Gibbons at Baker Stables, 164 Four Winds Road in Port Angeles.

Visit www.bakerstables.net for more information..

■ On Oct. 26 at 6 p.m., Backcountry Horsemen Peninsula Chapter meeting at Clallam County Fairgrounds kitchen. Contact Marc Reinertson at almosta_ranch@olympus.net.

■ On Saturdays at noon, Play Days at Chimacum Saddlery & Tack. Barrels, poles, key hole, key race, rescue race, flags, cal stake, figure 8, team baton and ring race. \$2 a Race. \$8 Arena Fee. High-point awards for the day given in three age groups.

■ Backcountry Horsemen 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.