

October 20, 2005

Washington State Horseman, Inc.
Box 540
Yelm, WA 98597

Dear "Club Of The Year" Nominating Committee;

MERIDIAN RIDING CLUB

It is with pride that we submit this letter for your consideration of Washington State Horseman's Club of the Year 2005 Award.

Many years ago it became apparent to three families that there was a need in the community for a place where neighborhood children could gather and safely ride their horses. Within a short period of time a field was purchased, a drill team was started and our club was born.

Over the years our club has become home to many families. A gathering place where good horsemanship is learned, effective leadership and teamwork is the norm and lifetime friendships are made. A place where mothers and fathers can be involved with their children in a wholesome environment.

WASHINGTON STATE HORSEMAN INVOLMENT

In 1960 we elected to become a 100% Washington State Horseman Club. Club leaders understood the importance of having a State organization act as our voice in Legislative issues working to protect the horse industry and horse related matters. They felt teamwork between smaller clubs and one large State Organization would enable their voices to be heard more clearly.

They also saw Washington State Horseman as an additional outlet for our members to have fun with their horses through games, competitive trail riding, and showing. Washington State Horseman became our parent club. That relationship is as strong today as it was in the beginning.

We have demonstrated our commitment to the success of Washington State Horseman consistently over the years. In 2005, members filled the following positions from our club:

Director of the Trails and Pleasure Riders Division
The Chairperson for the Hunter-Jumper Division
The head of the WSH Penny-A-Mile Trails Program
Puget Sound Zone Youth Merit Leader
Puget Sound Zone Representative
The 2005 WSH Convention and Banquet Chairperson

Each of these positions requires many hours of volunteer time each month to support the mission and success of WSH.

PENNY-A-MILE

Our club as a whole enthusiastically supports the Penny-a-Mile program. We have a good understanding of how important the program is to all Washington trail riders. The miles and places ridden are recorded with the state to show our legislatures the number of riders using our trails. This helps impress upon them the importance of maintaining and developing Washington State's system of trails for all riders. Our club has consistently been the leader in Penny-A-Mile submissions over the years. This year was no exception.

WASHINGTON STATE HORSEMAN CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

Our club pays for and sends three delegates to the WSH Convention each year to represent us and vote on our behalf. They are then required to prepare a report on the convention for presentation at our next monthly meeting.

Our youth will be hosting a Hawaiian theme pool party at the 2005 WSH Convention. They have been busy baking cookies as a group and getting ready. They are truly excited about being a part of the Convention this year.

Our club enjoys being a part of WSH's statewide network. When WSH asked for help sending letters to Senator Maria Cantwell and Senator Patty Murray on the pending Right to Ride Bill (S.781) sponsored by Senator Mike Crapo from Idaho, the issue was discussed at length at our monthly meeting. Sample letters were handed out and many of our members sent letters to support approval of the bill.

THE CANTER NEWSLETTER SUPPORT

Throughout the years, our members have consistently supported the Canter with interesting articles and information. This year was no different. Articles could be found in the Canter concerning volunteer work with the Forest Service, special trail rides, play days, camp outs, and youth activities.

MEMBERSHIP

We are a very active club. In 2005 we enrolled 16 new members and their families. As our club is a 100% WSH club, it means that WSH gained members and more support also.

“WHAT MAKES OUR CLUB TICK”

As mentioned above, we are a very active club. Our members demonstrate a continuing commitment to our clubs activities. Our goal is to offer something for everyone who loves and owns horses.

Every month the clubhouse is full of members attending the General Meeting. Business is discussed and so are upcoming events. Committees are formed and volunteers step-up to help. The Secretary of our youth group gives a report on what they are working on. At the close of the meeting there is social time and a winner of the monthly drawing is announced.

The meetings are managed according to Robert's Rules of Order. Members who want to be heard are given the time necessary. Discussion is encouraged. Business is conducted and it is obvious that members feel they are part of a family. A family with a solid commitment to good horsemanship, the energy to take on difficult tasks and succeed and the ability to make changes when it is necessary.

CLUB ACTIVITIES IN 2005

PLAY DAYS - FUND RAISER:

We host seven play days during the year. The Play Days are one of our clubs main fund raiser. Washington State Horseman's rules are used so if club members want to compete in WSH games they are better prepared.

These events draw contestants with skills that could be considered expert and also beginners of all ages. The general public is invited but only our members can compete for the coveted “Year End Awards”.

You will see our member volunteers everywhere on Play Days. The entry booth has two members working to handle crowds as large as 100 riders. A computer tracks entries, division, scores, placing, etc. Yes, one member in the entry booth must know how to run the program and how to quickly switch to manual calculations if the computer crashes.

Upstairs in the announcer's booth you will see and hear two members acting as announcers calling classes and age divisions, announcing times and cracking a few jokes so that everyone has a good time.

There are two announcers because attendance at our play days is large enough to require our club to run two lines at the same time. This keeps the day moving more quickly and ensures everyone gets home earlier in the evening.

On the grounds you will see our members manning both the in-gate and out-gate. You can observe members at the end of the arena ready to jump on the club tractor and smooth the entire arena. Other members have rakes and work to keep pattern footing smooth and safe for riders. There are members working as judges and back-up timers too.

I might mention that because people get pretty hot working all day in the sun, special seats, that look a bit like what a lifeguard would use, were made for the judge and gate people. The seats have a roof on them to give these members shade. The play days last from 9:00 am until around 6:00 PM depending on the number of entries.

Oh, let's not forget the kitchen. Not only is lunch served but breakfast, snacks and drinks are also. This means hours of planning meals, shopping and stocking the kitchen along with food preparation and service. Club members handle all responsibilities.

Last but not least, our caretaker spends many hours the day before each play day preparing the main arena and warm-up area.

A tired bunch of members go home late after each play day. But the next month you will see them smiling and ready to go at 9:00 am. Play days provide a good source of income to our club. They also go far in gaining new members.

PRIZE RIDE – FUND RAISER:

Our annual Prize Ride has historically been a very large even. It draws up to 300 plus riders. The ride took place on September 11th this year at Buck Creek Recreational Area. Planning for the Prize Ride starts in January of each year. We obtain a permit from the Forest Service. Port-a-potty's must be arranged for. Prizes, prizes and more prizes must be received through donations from businesses and members. Emergency services must be notified that a large group of horseman will be in the area in case of accident. A veterinarian and a farrier must be on call for any horses requiring attention.

Members begin riding and marking trails at Buck Creek two weeks before the Prize Ride. We also pick up a lot of trash. The club has established trails for experienced riders and trails for less experienced riders. This way people at all levels of experience will have fun.

Our club serves lunch with the ride. Food, plates, silverware, etc. must be shopped for. All the food, tables, cooking equipment, directional signs, loud speakers, tents, etc. are hauled to Buck Creek unloaded and put in place. This is no small job!

The day before the ride you will see a caravan of our members coming into camp ready to get to work. Everything is unloaded and set-up. In the evening it is time for a campfire and a great potluck. You can hear a lot of laughter around the campfire and a friendly poker game off to the side. It is obvious our members are friends and are willing to work very hard together to help the club be successful.

Almost the entire membership turns out to help on the day of the Prize Ride. The five checkpoints are manned with at least two members each. Three members run the registration table. Three or more members are in the kitchen. One member is at the prize table. One member is at the club booth talking about membership and club activities.

One volunteer works as a runner. He rides a four-wheeler and runs from checkpoint to checkpoint meeting the needs of checkpoint volunteers and riders.

One member remains at camp with a walkie-talkie acting as a coordinator. Each person handling checkpoints along with the runner has walkie-talkies. Communication, direction and assistance are always available.

We have members, to include our youth, riding as first rider out and also sweep. We have members riding the trail after all riders have gone through taking down trail markers and cleaning. Our network-of-members are organized, work as a team and annually provide the riding community with one of the best Prize Rides in the State of Washington.

When the prizes are passed out and everyone is fed, several members head out to the highway to help assist people attending the ride go safely on their way.

Back in camp you see everyone helping to pack-up the kitchen, coolers, tents, tables, etc. and head for home.

The income received from the Prize Ride helps us support our clubhouse and grounds. But it does more. We decided several years ago to donate 10% of the rides net income to a person in need. This person is usually a child. More to come on that later.

WORK PARTIES:

Owning and maintaining a clubhouse, arena and grounds takes a lot of time, energy and maintenance. Our members gather several times during the year to help keep our clubhouse, announcer's booth and grounds in excellent condition. Work parties are a lot of hard work but also a lot of fun. You learn a lot about someone when they are swinging a hammer beside you!

In the spring there is always painting to do, fences to fix and kitchen equipment to get ready for the months ahead.

Very little if any maintenance work is done by a hired contractor. Our members are very willing to jump into projects. I have seen men and women alike replacing and repairing the clubhouse roof, working on leaky plumbing, building fences and spreading sand. Our youth do a lot of work picking rocks out of the arena and working right along side the adults on other projects.

This year one of our members had a large rearing horse carved out of wood made and dedicated it to the club. It is a beautiful addition to our clubhouse front yard.

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Being a leader in any endeavor requires giving back. Our members have embraced their responsibility in giving back to the community. The club has historically provided a Thanksgiving feast, Christmas presents, Christmas trees, clothing, toys and money to individuals in the community who have demonstrated need during the holiday season. I am sure the tradition will be repeated this year.

Several years ago we elected to donate 10% of the income received from the Prize Ride to a person or family in need. The person or family did not need to be a member of our club to qualify. The fund was named after Mario Cruz. Mario was a little boy who had great strength, shining eyes and a big heart. Mario died of cancer at a very young age.

In 2005 we selected Chayce Curry to receive a \$500 donation. Chayce had a rare bone disease called Perthes Disease. Parthes strikes 1 in 25,000 girls. Chayce, her mother and a six-month-old sibling spent six months in Baltimore while Chayce underwent treatment.

With Parthes Disease, the bones in your legs become dead. If not treated at an early age, you spend the rest of your life confined to a wheelchair.

The family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore. Our donation went to help cover living expenses while Chayce was in treatment. The wonderful outcome to this story is the treatment was successful and she can now walk without pain.

During the summer, our Youth Advisor put together several Fun Days for the club's youth. The cost to ride was cans of food that were donated to the area food banks.

Several of our youth also participated in the collection of food during the Postal Service Food Drive.

Another one of our club's youth routinely goes to Heritage House Convalescent Home in Enumclaw, WA to visit with residents receiving rehabilitation therapy. This same young member made Easter baskets this year and donated them to the area food bank.

In June several of our members road the Ride for Research Trail Ride which took place at Capital Forest. The ride was organized to raise money for the Washington State University Veterinarian School

FOREST SERVICE SUPPORT:

Since 1981, our club has helped the White River Forest Service District maintain trails at the Buck Creek Recreation Area and Airstrip. Each Memorial Day weekend you will find a large group of our clubs volunteers hard at work in the area.

The 2005-work party at Buck Creek was a wonderful effort. Approximately 60 members turned out, adults and kids alike. New trails were established where old ones had begun to cause damage on one hillside. A culvert was put in place to control water and erosion. Twenty yards of gravel was spread in one area to stabilize a hillside trail.

Two bridges on the White River Trail that leads to the Deep Creek Trail were no longer safe to cross. Quite a crew headed up to take care of them. The result was two bridges that are “works of art” and will last for years.

The Buck Creek Horse Camp has gone through many changes at the hands of our skilled club members over the past years. When the camp was first established the club drove pickup trucks and 2 horse trailers. Now we drive large trucks with 4 horse trailers, trailers with living quarters and motor homes. The road through the camp has been enlarged and so has parking spaces to accommodate larger rigs.

On Memorial Day weekend this year a huge stump was removed in the camp to make more parking space. Thirty more yards of gravel was spread to keep rigs out of the mud and fallen limbs from the winter were cleaned from the entire area.

Trail cleaning crews headed up the Ranger Creek Trail and a second crew headed up the Deep Creek Trail. Between the two groups they took out around 20 trees that were blocking passage. Another group of members worked on the trails around the horse camp, Sun Top Trail and Skookum Flats. We picked up garbage from area campsites and informed the members with chain saws where to find and remove fallen trees blocking these trails.

The evening potluck found some 60 people around the fire. There is a “Big Rock” just across from where we built our club’s community campfire. It was noted that around this years campfire sat two families with three generations each who had played on that rock as members of our club.

This year’s campfire did not let members down. People were tired but felt good that so much had been accomplished. Stories were told of trail rides and member’s antics from years gone by. Loving words were spoken about four members whose dedication to our club and the Buck Creek area has lead the club to establish memorials at Buck Creek in their honor.

YOUTH MERIT:

Our club is home to one of the largest groups of kids enrolled in the WSH Youth Merit program.

Youth Merit meetings take place monthly at the clubhouse. The curriculum centers around WSH Youth Merit books. A structured lesson is developed and taught. Some months a craft project is completed. Good behavior is rewarded. The kids elect officers each year from within the group. These officers are held to a high standard, as they are to set an example in what they do and say for the rest of the group. Learning good leadership skills becomes a part of everything they do.

Two of the educational activities our youth took part in this year included a trip to the Seattle Mounted Police Unit on October 2nd and to Emerald Downs Racetrack on August 6th.

At the Seattle Mounted Police Unit they learned a lot about the type of temperament a horse must have to qualify to work with the Police Department. They learned the type of obstacles that are used to train a horse which enables it to deal with large loud crowds of people, traffic, cars, etc. that it will encounter on the job. They were able to tour the stable area and talk with many of the officers about their experiences.

At Emerald Downs Racetrack the kids were able to tour the stable area and watch the owners and managers get horses ready to race. They toured the veterinarian clinic that included a special table used to lay a horse down for surgery and viewed the padded recovery room.

The kids asked many questions of the veterinarian who led the tour of the clinic. They learned a lot about what is needed to care for a racehorse and the types of injuries that are typical of a racehorse.

After the tours the kids gathered at an area restaurant and discussed what they had seen at the track. After lunch they returned to the track to watch the horses race.

Our youth volunteers gave many hours of their time toward helping our club in 2005. You could find our youth gathering prizes, riding sweep, marking trails, working in the kitchen and maintaining stations at the Prize Ride. They also worked in the kitchen and on the grounds at all seven monthly Play Days. In addition, they worked on the trails and in the horse camp at Buck Creek over Memorial Day weekend. And the older kids dyed Easter eggs at a monthly Youth Merit meeting. The eggs were used for the annual Easter Egg Hunt that took place after the Easter Service and Breakfast at the club on Easter morning.

A couple of our youth also participated in WSH approved horse shows this year.

In addition to WSH and our club's activities, many of our youth show their horses in 4-H. Several of them qualified and went to both County and State Fair this year. At the fairs they gave demonstrations, turned in their completed record books and competed in judging.

Many of our kids also rode with our adults in the Puyallup Fair Parade in September this year.

Pat Parelli, a leading International Horse Trainer and Lecturer hosted a clinic at the Puyallup Fair Grounds in 2005. Several of our club youth attended the clinic with their parents and gained new insight in training techniques.

Whether our youth are helping in our club activities, showing in WSH approved shows, completing record books or showing their horses in 4-H shows, they are asked to share their experiences with other youth members at the Youth Merit meetings. Organizing their thoughts, talking in front of the group and sharing their experiences teaches our kids a valuable lesson in communication and leadership.

At the end of the year our youth vote for who will receive the Youth-Of-The-Year Award. The youth leaders talk with the kids about what type of a person should receive such recognition from the group. Things such as being helpful, courteous to others, being on time, ect. are discussed. Once a definition of character traits is agreed upon by the youth group, they silently vote for the youth they feel best fits that definition for the year to receive the award.

At the Christmas Awards Banquet, our club recognizes each youth individually by handing them their plaque, certificate or whatever else they have earned through WSH's Youth Merit Program. There is a lot of applause and attention paid to their efforts. They walk away feeling proud of their accomplishments and ready for the new Youth Merit year and its challenges.

Our club believes that the kids are our future. We work hard to give them every opportunity to succeed.

TRAIL RIDES AND CAMP OUTS:

Many trail rides take place each year led by members from our club. The rides in 2005 were no different. The club hosted a New Years Day Ride, an Easter Ride, Memorial Day Ride and work party at Buck Creek, Men's Ride and Ladies Ride.

The Men's only and Ladies only ride and camp outs are a lot of fun. The Men's Ride took place at Mud Lake on June 10th through 12th this year. The men attending the ride did a lot of relaxing around the campfire, dinner consisted of great potlucks and a round of poker filled the rest of the evenings. The riding during the day was pretty rocky. They ran into some goats and a Rattlesnake that was probably more shocked to see them than they were to see it.

The Ladies Ride took place at the Buck Creek Horse Camp. Approximately 20 ladies over the age of 18 attended the ride on September 23 through 25th this year. Setting up camp with no men around, riding trails, fun games around the campfire and wonderful potlucks filled the weekend with activities for the gals. I think you could hear the laughter all the way back in town.

Several day rides also took place this year. Club members take turns leading the rides out. They choose the location of the ride and making sure everyone returns safely to their trailers.

These rides are well attended. Everyone seems to have a wonderful time. When the weather is chilly, you can often find warm stew, coffee and hot chocolate waiting for you back at the trailers.

DRILL TEAM:

A drill team started the club many years ago and in 2005 a new drill team was born. One of our youth advisors worked hard bringing our drill team back to life. The new team includes both our adults and youth. The team performed at one of our Play Days during the summer. There is a good possibility that this group will drill at the Roy Rodeo and begin entering competitions in 2006. This is truly an exciting time for our club!

SOCIAL:

Our club hosted an Easter Breakfast on Easter Sunday prepared by our men in 2005. The breakfast took place after our members listened to a Cowboy Easter Service in the clubhouse. The club hosted a potluck, Bunko and Texas Holdum card night in February when riding was difficult and the members wanted an opportunity to come together for a social gathering.

There is a Halloween Party and potluck planned the end of October 2005 and plans are also in the works for our annual Christmas Banquet and Awards dinner. The Awards Banquet will include the presentation of Youth Merit Awards from WSH, Play Day Awards, Man, Woman and Youth of the Year Awards, Most Inspirational Youth Award, the Marge Griffin Trail Award and any Bite-the-Dust Awards earned during the year. Of course, Santa will hand out toys to the younger kids. Our members will laugh, pat each other on the backs for a job well done and relive all the good times that were had at the club and with other members in 2005.

MEMBER EDUCATION:

Our clubs provides both Formal and Informal educational opportunities for its members.

Formal education that took place in 2005 included a talk by Christine Spaulding of the Washington State Department of Agriculture. She spoke on the upcoming Animal Identification Legislation at the February General Meeting. And Dr. Nathaniel Stewart DVM from the Tahoma Veterinarian Clinic spoke at the May General Meeting on West Nile Vaccinations.

Informal education is an ongoing process in our club. Members learn from other members such things as how to high tie their horse on a line and not harm the tree it is tied to, how to clean your camping area and leave no trace. They learn how to change leads on a horse to successfully maneuver a barrel or poll pattern. They learn how to conduct meetings, organize fund-raisers and get people involved.

They learn about equine nutrition and whether or not to blanket a horse in the winter. They learn how to park a trailer in a small area and if you leave your cinch at home you probably aren't going to ride that day.

They learn they are not alone. They have a parent organization through their membership in WSH that is leading the cause to protect their right to ride. The work that is going on through WSH is reported on and discussed at every General Meeting of our club.

They learn that being involved in a family club like ours helps keep their kids away from drugs, off the streets and on the right path to responsible adulthood. These are only a small sampling of what our members learns through club membership.

CONCLUSION:

I want to thank you for taking the time to read our submission for WSH Club-of-the-Year 2005. We are an enthusiastic and hard working club. Our members look at WSH as a parent and a leader in Legislative issues. WSH's influence can be seen at meetings, play days, camp out, youth and educational activities.

It is our intent here to demonstrate to you that we are not just involved in functions and activities. We are a family club with the endeavor to strengthen horsemanship and families involved with horses in our community and throughout the State worthy of your recognition.

Respectfully Submitted,