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## BENT TREE SADDLE CLUB NEWSLETTER

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December 2024

### 2025 BTSC Officer Candidates

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce a 2025 Slate of Candidates for the Executive Committee as follows:

President – Julie Heinsman  
Vice President – Karie Kruse  
Treasurer – Jim Sylvia  
Secretary – Lisa Sylvia  
Bent Tree Liaison – Michele Murray  
Appointee – Megan Mathisen  
Appointee – Bob Crowl  
Past President – Rich Vigue  
Past Past President – Judie Uchitel

This newsletter article constitutes a 30 day notice to the membership. The Executive Committee is asking the club members to agree to a one time suspension of Article 6.0 of our By-laws which requires the election to be held during a General Meeting. Please contact me as soon as possible but no later than Sunday, January 5, 2025 if you do not agree to this action. If there are no objections, the above Slate of Candidates will be declared elected on January 5, 2025.

*Rich*



**President's Column**

Indian leg wrestling should be an Olympic sport. Even ping pong is an Olympic sport. Why not Indian leg wrestling?

This thought occurred to me at our family's Thanksgiving dinner. Our whole clan was there and, per usual, as the evening wore on and the beverages were taking their effect some serious Indian leg wrestling commenced. That is after a lot of trash talking. It's a family tradition carried on from our Canadian ancestors. Lest you think I'm talking about the youngsters, the winner was my 55 year-old daughter, Heather, who pinned her 57 year-old sister in the championship match. Prior to that she had pinned my 19 year-old grandson and my 23 year-old grandson. After the matches we all celebrated the family champion with another round of Fireball. I was thinking of sponsoring her for the Olympics but, the kids reminded me that it's not an Olympic sport. Well, it should be. I feel a movement starting. A small movement.

If you are still reading this article, you might be asking yourself what does this have to do with the club? The answer is absolutely nothing. However, since this is my last President's Column, I can write about whatever I want unafraid that I'll be taken out of my job. Kind of like someone else I'm aware of. 😊

I am thrilled that Julie Heinsman has stepped forward to take the reins of the club. Having been President before and having kept up to date with the current happenings, she will bring much-needed new ideas to the table. If you haven't renewed your membership yet for next year, please consider doing so now (see page 7). It's going to be an interesting ride!

*Rich*



**Ellen Stara Memorial Ride Recap  
Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**

This was our third annual memorial ride. Somehow each time we have managed to avoid bad weather. However, the morning of this ride did not look very promising.

When I arrived at the Garland Mountain parking lot around 10am a cold front was coming through and the wind was gusting at levels I hadn't seen in a long, long time. I got Jazz out of the trailer and tied him near the door to the tack room. I placed my saddle on the ground alongside him; put the saddle pad on his back and, while holding on to the pad, lifted the saddle onto him. It wasn't exactly a nice smooth fit but I was able to maneuver it in place. As the entrants were walking up to the registration table the look on their faces showed that they were having some second thoughts about the ride. We, in fact, did lose 5 riders who didn't even bother to unload their horses. Thankfully, they all graciously paid the entry fee which included lunch and a memento.

The wind finally passed through around 11am. From then on we actually had decent weather for the ride. The total headcount was 42 including approximately 10 people who drove to the event. We had box lunches ready for everyone as they arrived at Staraland and members of CTHA's Board of Directors were there with desserts and a 50/50 raffle. After lunch we had a short ceremony at the Stara cemetery acknowledging the impact that Ellen had on our riding trails and how much she is missed by those of us who had the good fortune to know her.

This year's ride was jointly sponsored by BTSC, CTHA, and Friends of Garland Mountain. We not only recovered our costs but were able to make a contribution to the Garland Mountain Trails. Based on the many very positive Facebook posts the following day, it looks like we're going to do it again next year.

*Rich*



### Year-end Bash Recap Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>

We had 33 members attend the Year-end Bash at Bent Tree's Tavern at the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole. The event started at 6pm with a cocktail hour and included some time to hear directly from the horse's mouth what the status and plans are for the Bent Tree Stables.

Ralph Morse and Buddy Creef, representing the Bent Tree Board of Directors, spoke to the group and took questions from the group. The net is that the Board will suspend Stables operation at the end of December. It will then look at possible business models going forward. We were told that the Board has every intention of restarting operations once a new business structure for the Stables has been determined.

We had a short General Meeting following a delicious Italian buffet. 2024 year-end awards went to Judie Uchitel who received the Founder's Award; Beyonca Padgett and Ronda Erway were presented the Volunteer Award; and Megan Mathisen won the Spirit Award.

Bill Pound provided background music during the meal and topped off the evening with a fun round of name that tune.

*Rich*



Judie Uchitel, Beyonca Padgett, Ronda Erway, and Megan Mathisen displaying their year-end awards. Judie, Beyonca, and Ronda total 9 years on the Executive Committee with Ronda having served the most with 4 consecutive years. Many thanks to them and to Megan, Lisa Sylvia and Bob Crowl for agreeing to hang with me during 2024. As we all know there are givers and takers in this world. When it comes to the Saddle Club these people are definitely givers.

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**BTSC Paraphernalia**

The club has a couple items ready for distribution to club members. As part of the agreement struck with BICI we have ordered club identification tags to be placed on members' tack when riding in Bent Tree. Also, recently we ordered new saddle club hats. Both orders had minimum quantities. As a result, we have an excess amount. The Executive Committee has decided to give the tags free to members who need them and to sell the remaining hats for \$20 each. The merchandize is stored in the Saddle Club shed at the Horse Park. Call or text me at 770-289-7272 if you'd like to have one.

*Rich*



**Bent Tree Saddle Club  
Treasurer's Report**

November 28, 2024

Prepared by Ronda Erway, Treasurer

Beginning Balance		\$1,741.60
Debits		
Date	Description	
11/16/24	Bill Pound (Bash Entertainment)	(\$ 300.00)
11/16/24	The BT Tavern ) (Bash Catering)	(\$ 793.68)
11/16/24	Rich Vigue (Bash Expenses)	(\$ 23.54)
11/16/24	Julie Heinsman (Bash Overpayment)	(\$ 25.00)
Total Debits		(\$1,142.22)
Deposits		
Date	Description	
11/18/24	Bash payments	\$ 100.00
11/20/24	PayPal Transfer (Bash Payments)	\$ 654.62
Total Deposits		\$ 754.62
Ending Balance 11/24/24		\$1,354.00

*\*Remaining PayPal Balance from Year-end Bash \$38.95*

*\*\*Pending approved expenditures*

*Randy Taylor:*

*Judges Stand Repair \$500*

*Bridge Redo \$250*

**2024 Executive Committee**

President: Rich Vigue  
Vice-President: Lisa Sylvia  
Treasurer: Ronda Erway  
Secretary: Beyonca Padgett  
BT Liaison: Bob Crowl  
Past President: Judie Uchitel  
Past, Past Pres. Megan Mathisen

**2024 Positions**

Membership: Bob Crowl  
Newsletter Ed.: Rich Vigue  
Email Distrib: Ronda Erway  
Website Admin: Jim Sylvia

Visit our website  
at

[www.BentTreeSaddleClub.com](http://www.BentTreeSaddleClub.com)



Join our Group Page on Facebook



**It's time to renew your membership. Don't miss out on the latest news from the Club. Make this newsletter your source for up-to-date info on Bent Tree Saddle Club activities and, especially in 2025, what 's happening with the Bent Tree Stables. Your friendly reporter/columnist/layout artist/editor is on the job. Keep your subscription current. The 2025 Membership Application is attached to this issue. Don't wait. Send it in now!**

**Even better yet, why don't you gift a membership to someone you think might like this wacko group of horse lovers. Jim Sylvia has put a downloadable version of the above gift certificate on the Saddle Club's website. It is located under the Alerts or Gifts tab. [Click here](#) for a direct link to the site.**



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# Bent Tree Saddle Club – 2025 Membership Application

(Payable to Bent Tree Saddle Club)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Reg (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_ (First member must be a regular membership for \$40)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday(MM/DD) \_\_\_\_\_

### Bent Tree Affiliation

Are you a Bent Tree property owner? (Y) (N)      Do you board a horse at Bent Tree Stables? (Y) (N)

Are you a Bent Tree Lot Designee? (Y) (N)      Do you rent a home in Bent Tree? (Y) (N)

2<sup>nd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ Reg (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_ Social/Non-Rider (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_ Under 18 Youth Rider\* (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ Reg (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_ Social/Non-Rider (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_ Under 18 Youth Rider\* (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_

**DUES AND SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGMENT, NOTICE AND RELEASE (below) MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION.**  
New member 2025 dues are effective October 2024 through December 2025. Renewal dues apply to the calendar year. Mail application & check to: **Bent Tree Saddle Club, C/O Bob Crowl 181 Grassy Knob Ct. #20326, Jasper, GA 30143**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, NOTICE AND RELEASE

THE UNDERSIGNED does hereby, for himself, his heirs, executors and administrators acknowledge that the activities engaged in and/or participated in are covered by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 4-12-1 through 4-12-5 and that **Bent Tree Community, Incorporated and Bent Tree Saddle Club** are **Equine Activity Sponsors** as contemplate thereunder and further acknowledge that he has received the **Warning** as required in OCGA 4-12-4 (Warning required effect of failure to comply with notice requirement). The warning is as follows.

### WARNING

**Under Georgia law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activity, pursuant to Chapter 12 of Title 4 for the Official Code for Georgia Annotated.**

I acknowledge and fully understand that Equine Activities and particularly "Trail Rides" and cross-country horseback riding over obstacles, steep and rough terrain and with unknown riders and horses can be dangerous activities. I wish to participate in these activities knowing they can be dangerous. I accept and assume all the risks of injury (including death) to my horse, my property and me. Members of the Bent Tree Saddle Club will not knowingly ride on private property without the property owner's prior consent. When I do ride on private property I do so at my own risk. Use of protective helmets is recommended. If I choose to ride without a helmet, it will be at my own risk.

Should I require medical assistance for any reason during any Equine Activity and not be in position to obtain, request or authorize such treatment at the time, I hereby authorize the Equine Activity Sponsors to obtain such medical treatment or emergency care as they may deem necessary or desirable and I agree to hold the Equine Activity Sponsors harmless with regard to any such emergency care or expenses arising therefrom.

The Equine Activity Sponsors do not condone the drinking of alcohol or taking of drugs at Equine Activities. If you are taking any drugs or medications that might affect your ability to participate in any Equine Activity or otherwise do not have the experience, knowledge, or ability to participate in any Equine Activity, please do not participate.

**Club activities you are interested in leading/supporting. Please circle all that apply and include within circle the letter L (lead) or S (support) to indicate preferred role.**

- \* Trail Rides      \*Social Events      \*Equestrian Events      \* Arena/Trail Workdays      \*Newsletter      \*Echo Articles
- \* Facebook Posts      \*Email Distribution

**Do you own a horse trailer?** Yes No (please circle one)

**Acknowledged and agreed:**

1: Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2: Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sponsor Members' Signatures – 2 sponsors are required (only for new applicants who are not Bent Tree Affiliates)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\*Youth Memberships are for those under the age of 18 as of the date of the application who are members of the household of a Full Member.