

NEWSLETTER

BENT TREE SADDLE CLUB



January 2025

A Year of Opportunities!

Happy New Year!! With the new year comes a new slate of officers, but first we need to thank the 2024 officers and volunteers. They truly care about our Club and worked hard to put on events. We are fortunate to have many of them returning in 2025. Karie Kruse is a new member of our team and has taken on the task of our Newsletter. We are excited to have her enthusiasm and creative spirit working for our Club. I'm lucky, as well, to be part of this team of "awesomeness"! My personal decision to join the Executive Committee caught me by surprise. As there was talk of suspending or dissolving the Club, I found myself emotionally involved and realized that I didn't want to lose this part of my social and horse life. There are way too many special memories and people to let it go. I am excited to be here and for our future!!

The calendar is starting to take shape. January includes a **Poker Ride** with lunch at the Erways. The **Kick-Off Party** is scheduled for February 1st



and includes our Q1 general meeting. I promise to keep it short! See pages 2-3 for details on both events. If you have an idea for an event, please let us know. We need leaders and volunteers at most of our events, I'm counting on you to help us out!

The future of our Club will depend on our members becoming more actively involved. To that end, we encourage new-member participation in our activities and are in the process of planning a few horse events outside of Bent Tree. If we can attract more riders and friends to check us out, hopefully, they'll join in on our fun. Please invite anyone who you think would be interested to come to one of our events. Everyone is welcome! You can now offer your friend or family member a gift membership. Check out our **Member Gift Certificate Program** on the BTSC website.

A tour guide once told my group, "Let me know if you get done before I do." Well, I hope you didn't get done before I did! See you soon and Happy New Year!

Julie Heinsman

No Bluffing! It's a Poker Ride ... Who's All In?



Poker Ride on the Bent Tree Trails and Lunch at the Erway Farm

Saturday, January 18th, 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Riders' itinerary for the day

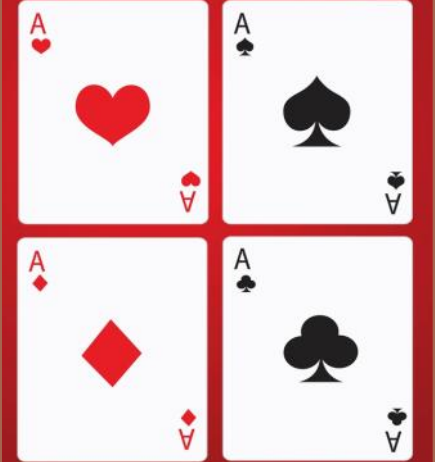
- 10:30 AM Riders and horses check-in at the BT arena
- 11:00 AM Riders depart from arena and ride the Bent Tree trails
- 12:15 PM Lunch at the Erway Farm & "Best Poker Hand" prize
- 1:15 PM Riders leave the Erway Farm
- 2:00 PM Arrival at the BT arena

Non-riders welcome for lunch and poker

- 12:15 PM Lunch at the Erway Farm, 282 Kelso Rd., Jasper, GA

Here's What You Need to Know

- ◆ Rules and directions will be given at the arena
- ◆ Riders choose their groups and ride at their own pace
- ◆ There are two "card stops" along the way
- ◆ Non-riders will receive their cards at lunch
- ◆ The "Best Poker Hand" receives a prize
- ◆ There's a heated tack room, if you need to warm up



Bring a sandwich. Coffee, hot cocoa, water, and dessert will be provided.

Two driving volunteers needed to man the "card stops" in Bent Tree. Both stops are accessible by car. No hiking is required.

Don't Miss the Fun and Dress Warm!

RSVP - Ronda Erway, rrerway@gmail.com or 402-540-3338 by Saturday, January 11th. Be sure to say if you're riding or driving.

A New Year, Best Friends, and Great Fun!

Kick-Off Party

Saturday, February 1st at 6:00 PM
Club Tamarack, Bent Tree



Let's Get This Party Started and Celebrate Our Love of HORSES!

**The Best Friends Are Horse People!
Join Us For Fun, Great Food, and Friendship.**

Event Details:

- ⇒ Q1 General Meeting and Dinner
- ⇒ Music by DJ - Mike Erlich
- ⇒ Cash bar for wine and cocktails
- ⇒ Cost is \$45.- per person

Click [HERE](#) to pay online with  - or -

Mail your check for \$45.- to:
Bent Tree Saddle Club, c/o Julie Heinsman
516 Pleasant Union Road, Jasper, GA 30143

Here's to the times I can't remember
with the friends I'll never forget!

See Y'all There!

**“CELEBRATE
OUR LOVE
OF HORSES
WITH BEST
FRIENDS!”**

**RSVP - Julie Heinsman, mymtnpeace@gmail.com
or 404-550-0270 by January 23rd**

O-Mok-See Recap - Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024

Our final O-Mok-See of the year took place in December, a little later than usual due to the cancellation of our September event because of bad weather. Despite the chilly, overcast conditions with temperatures hovering around 55°F degrees, we were thrilled to pull it off.

Initially, we anticipated nine riders for the day, but thanks to a few last-minute entries, we ended up with 12 riders and 14 entries using multiple horses.

A big thank you to Janet, who was invaluable in the judge's stand, managing the times, clocks, ribbons, and keeping everything running smoothly. Jazz was slightly lame, so Rich spent the day helping her out. We owe you both so much gratitude for your years of volunteering.

This event also welcomed two new riders, Eric Steedle and Sam Smith, who rode horses from Keeve's herd. We learned that Eric is in the process of purchasing, or has already purchased, one of the horses. They were a fantastic addition to the event, and we sincerely hope they'll join the BTSC in 2025. As we all know, the Club needs more young riders with energy and strong backs! We're also hoping that Eric's mom, Cindy Rodeo, might join the Club as well – she was a great help and took photos and videos throughout the day.

One of my personal highlights was watching Claire Eubanks ride her cherished horse, Dance. After a brief health hiatus, Dance looked happy and healthy, and Claire wore a smile the entire day. She didn't dismount much, clearly relishing every moment with her beloved horse.

As always, Lig and Deb brought their festive spirit, decorating their horses and themselves with Santa horse blankets, fetlock stockings, and Christmas sweaters.

Rose and Joyce also had a great showing, with Boomer performing impressively and Candy steadily improving throughout the day, especially after a few months off. Maecy smiled all day long, and we are happy that she has become a regular.

The event featured our usual five competitions: Pole Bending, Baton Relay, and Ball Throw, along with two mystery events—Straight Barrels and Classic Barrels.

In the end, Elise claimed the title of Grand Champion, while Keeve took Reserve Grand Champion.



O-Mok-See Grand Champion, Elise Eubanks

The full list of participants included: Claire and Elise Eubanks, Lig Quigley, Deb Liggett, Lisa Sylvia, Ronda Erway, Joyce Delay, Rose Rhys, Maecy Cook, Eric Steedle, Sam Smith, and Keeve Krasner. It was a wonderful way to close out the season, and we're looking forward to more exciting events in 2025. So please stay tuned!

Lisa Sylvia



Andy "RODEO" Steedle

O-Mok-See



What is O-Mok-See?



O-Mok-Sees have been a part of the Club since before I joined in 2006. I knew Rich researched the event after reading an article about it in *National Horseman*. He then combined it with other concepts and introduced it to the Club. After a very brief internet search, I found the interesting article below on the website: www.omoksee.com.

Can you imagine our riders coming into the ring at full gallop while others sing and dance in the middle? Complete chaos, right? In today's world, O-Mok-Sees have generally become known as patterned horse racing events. Whatever you call them... I love them.

The community spirit and help for fellow riders always overrides the competitiveness. Whether you want to win or improve, listen to Claire Eubanks!

Julie

The Story of the Blackfoot Indian Tribe's "Riding Big Dance"

"The sport of O-Mok-See originates with the Blackfoot Indian Tribe where they described a particular style of riding as "oh-mak-see pass-kan" meaning "riding big dance." The second syllable of the first word is pronounced like our English word "mock". The last syllable of the second word is pronounced like our "can". The Blackfeet had no written language, all we can do is render the sounds. There is no incorrect spelling, so long as the sound is correctly presented. One might even desire to leave the second word (meaning "dance") off entirely, and simply make it oh-mak-see - riding big.

The Blackfeet's riding big dance was not celebrated for some fifty years. All the old people remember it as a very striking performance. It was principally a war ceremony. Before setting out on a mounted expedition against the enemy, the warriors of the camp performed this dance as a part of the prelude of stirring up courage and enthusiasm for battle. The warriors put on their finest dress costumes, decorated and painted their best horses, carrying their war bundles, shields, lances and bonnets. They mounted and gath-

ered at some distance out of sight of the camp. They turned and rode together at full speed into the great camp circle, circled around it once and then rode to the center of the camp.

In the center were a number of old men and women who sang special songs and beat drums for the horsemen. The horsemen then rode their trained horses to the rhythm of the singers and drummers. From time to time the riders dismounted and danced about on foot beside their horses, shooting in the air and shouting to one another to be brave when the battle came. If anyone fell from his horse during the ceremony it was considered an omen of bad luck.

O-Mok-See is more descriptive and more Western American than other names used for the sport of pattern horse racing. O-Mok-See found its way into our western riding vocabulary in the same manner as the Spanish-American word rodeo. O-Mok-See, historically speaking, was coined by people who were living here long before the Spaniards arrived with rodeo."

Reprinted from www.omoksee.com

From the Editor

First of all, a big shout out to Rich for doing an amazing job on the Newsletter last year. On behalf of all of us, Rich, thank you for your passion, humor and effort. You are the heart and soul of this Club, and we appreciate you (and Janet, too). Well, Pilgrim, those are some mighty big boots to fill (in my best John Wayne voice), but, seriously, I'll do my best to create interesting newsletters in the coming months.

A new year is a time of reflection and hope for good health, prosperity and better days to come. We make our resolutions, and whether we stick to them or not, we are genuinely excited about what the future may hold. Come what may, for me, the glass is always half full, and I see challenges as opportunities to learn, grow and get outside of my comfort zone. Even though the Club enters 2025 with some uncertainty, the Executive Committee is carrying on full speed ahead with pedal to the metal. This is going to be a fantastic year, and you can feel it in the air!

As far as the Newsletter goes, you'll see a slightly different format and some new features. To make an even more dynamic publication, I invite you to share a story about yourself, your horse, an interesting experience and a photo. We are very interested to learn and get to know you and your horse better. Submit to: NewsletterBTSC@gmail.com. Above all, feel free to make suggestions for improvement. Thanks in advance, and I wish everyone a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Karie Kruse

Membership Report

It's That Time Again...
Click [HERE](#) to Join or Renew Your Membership Online!

The Saddle Club had 81 members at the close of 2024. Counting two new members that joined toward the end of 2024 and recent renewals, we now have 28 members as we begin 2025. We welcome Hal Gurley to the Club. He is married to Karie Kruse, our vice president. We also welcome Betsy Robbe back to the Club. We look forward to seeing them at future events. I'm expecting many more renewals before the end of January so if you have not mailed or electronically submitted your 2025 membership renewal and dues payment, please do so.

A 2025 membership application is attached to this newsletter. You can also go to our website, **www.BentTreeSaddleClub.com**, for a membership application. Click on the 'About' tab and then 'Download Print Application'. See options for saving the membership form on your computer and attaching it to an email to me and using PayPal or various credit cards for payment of dues.

If you know of someone interested in joining our Club, please have them complete an application and send it to me for processing. Or have them contact me at 770-757-8596 if they have any questions. We are planning a fun and exciting year. I am looking forward to seeing you at our 2025 Kick-Off Party on February 1st, as well as other Club events this year. Happy New Year! Bob Crowl

Click [HERE](#) to pay with



Member Gift Certificate Program

You can now give a membership as a gift to a family member or friend. For just \$40.- each, he or she may participate in all of our rides, obstacle courses, trail challenges, and social events for the entire year 2025.

Go to the BTSC website. Print out and complete the certificate, and then give as your gift.

Send an E-mail to Bob Crowl at:
 bobcrowl@etcmail.com with the recipient's name, E-mail address, and phone number.

Mail your check for \$40.- to:
 Bent Tree Saddle Club, c/o Bob Crowl,
 181 Grassy Knob Ct. #20326, Jasper, GA 30143

Click [HERE](#) for more information about the program.



Treasurer's Report

Prepared by Ronda Erway, Treasurer, December 18, 2024

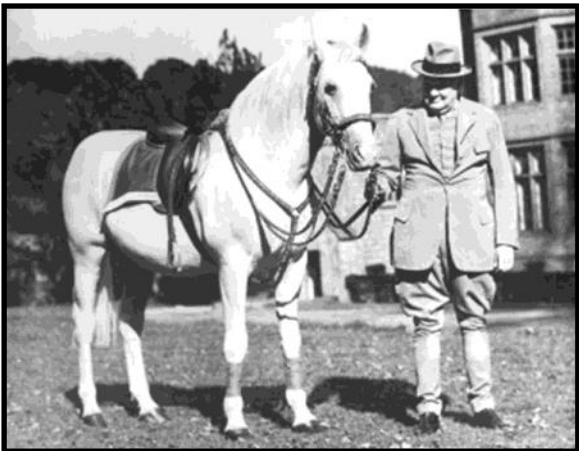
January 2025 - Beginning Balance			\$1,354.00
Debits			
<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
12/2/2024	Lisa Sylvia (EC Mtg Pizza Food)	(\$67.03)	
Total Debits			(\$67.03)
Deposits			
12/4/2024	PayPal transfer (Bash payments)	\$38.95	
12/9/2024	O-Mok-See Entry Fees	\$130.00	
12/18/2024	Membership Dues	\$800.00	
Total Deposits			\$968.95
Ending Balance 12/18/2024			<u>\$2,255.92</u>

*Pending approved expenditures

Randy Taylor: Judges stand repair	\$500.00
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Bent Tree Update

As we head into the New Year, the future of the Bent Tree Stables remains uncertain. The Bent Tree Board of Directors will hold a two-day orientation starting on January 7th to discuss Board initiatives, including the stables. Board member Ralph Morse stated that a 'What's Next?' Committee will be formed to review options moving forward. Stay tuned!



**“NO HOUR
IS WASTED
THAT IS SPENT
IN THE
SADDLE.”**

— *Winston Churchill*

Website News

A big thank you to Jim Sylvia! Jim provides support for the Club's website and works hard to keep it updated with useful information about the Club, scheduled events, horse shows, trail rides, programs, and activities. You can even download maps of riding trails in the area. The main pages are accessible to the general public.

There is more valuable information behind the 'MEMBERS ONLY' protected wall that is accessible with a password. You'll find a member list, as well as bylaws, meeting minutes, policies, procedures, and online payment options.

Did you know that there's a Newsletter archive where you can read interesting articles about members, rides, competitions, and events over the past six years? It's super interesting and you will learn a lot about the Club's rich history and its involvement in the local equestrian community.

Visit the website at:
www.BentTreeSaddleClub.com

Need the password?
Send an E-mail to: InfoBTSaddleClub@gmail.com

Romeo's IMMK Journey

I purchased Romeo back in March of 2023. He waited three whole days before deciding that it was time his new mom truly experienced the trials and tribulations of horse ownership. One day, he gave himself a full-mud facial which caused an ulcer in one of his eyes. I had to treat it twice a day for ten days by applying medication.

One day, I noticed a slight blue haze in the eye. It was really hard to see but it was concerning enough, so I did what all horse people do... I googled it. I convinced myself that it was just the lighting, but I was wrong. Every few months his eyelid would swell up, and he would start to squint. Sometimes it would clear up on its own, but other times it required more medication.

Romeo was diagnosed with Immune-Mediated Keratitis (IMMK) in his left eye. Keratitis is an inflammation of the cornea, and it's a common eye disease in horses. While IMMK is not usually painful, it can bother the horse and cause them to rub the itchy eye resulting in an ulcer. It can also be caused by a viral, bacterial, or fungal infection, as well as an immune-mediated disease, which is the case with Romeo.

Our veterinarian, Dr. Dana, from Horner and Nash suggested that Romeo get cyclosporine implants. These implants are tiny, jelly-like discs inserted behind the eyelid which slowly release medication. My only other alternative was to apply medication twice a day, every day, for the rest of Romeo's life.

The surgery had to be postponed a few times because Romeo kept rubbing his eye making the ulcer worse. Lorraine, the owner of Moonshine Acres where I board him, was wonderful and helped apply the medication, as well. Sometimes he needed it three times a day, which meant that I had to go very late at night to the stable. It was comical trying to find my bay horse in the middle of a pitch-dark pasture with a flashlight. I definitely got my steps in!

Member's Corner

After multiple rechecks, he was finally cleared for surgery on November 21st last year. Dr. Dana and her assistant, Jordann, were amazing. They made sure that Romeo was comfortable throughout the procedure. The most difficult part of the whole ordeal was trying to get him to go inside the trailer to come back home.

Romeo is doing great with his implants. He no longer makes dirt angels on the ground with his face, and his eye is bright and open. Unfortunately, IMMK can only be managed and is not likely to ever be cured. Some horses maintain acceptable vision, while others may lose significant vision. It just depends on the type of IMMK and the horse's response to therapy. Romeo's implants will last only one to two years, so he'll need surgery again in the future. Luckily, we caught it early, and happy to report that he's doing just fine.

Megan Mathisen



Brave Romeo during his eye surgery.

Thank You Volunteers!



We couldn't start this New Year without saying Thank You to all of the BTSC volunteers who gave their precious time, talent, and treasure to help the Club in so many different ways. We couldn't function without you!

Especially to the members of the 2024 Executive Committee and those who held key positions, as well as our judges, time keepers, event organizers, ride leaders, pole jockeys, and poop scoopers... and everyone who helped us out this past year, we owe you a debt of gratitude. It takes a lot of hard work and team spirit to ensure that our events and activities run smoothly and professionally. We couldn't do it without you!

Last year was awesome, and we look forward to your help again this year!



New Class for Our Events

While I doubt Indian Leg Wrestling has made it to the Olympics, it has definitely made it to the BTSC. **This WILL be a part of some event we have this year!**

Having never actually witnessed this activity until a few weeks ago, it is now a part of my memory that won't be erased. Here's a teaser picture of our past president and vice president. If you can guess the winner, your name will be put in for a drawing for a coveted Bent Tree ball cap... just E-mail me with your guess before January 25th at mymtnpeace@gmail.com.
Julie



Lisa and Rich knee deep in fierce competition



Get Involved!

Volunteers Are The Heart Of Our Club

Interested in volunteering?

Contact us at: InfoBTSaddleClub@gmail.com



Annual Schedule 2025 (Work in Progress)



Date	Event	Time	Place	Organizer
Sat., Jan. 18	Poker Ride	10:30 AM	Bent Tree Arena	Ronda Erway
Sat., Feb. 1	Kick-Off Party	6:00 PM	Club Tamarack, Bent Tree	Julie Heinsman, Lisa Sylvia
TBD	Scavenger Hunt	TBD	TBD	Rich Vigue
Sat., Mar. 8	Horse Park Workday	10:30 AM	Bent Tree Arena	TBD
Mon., Mar. 17	St. Patrick's Day Dinner	6:30 PM	Rocco's Pub	Lisa Sylvia
Sun., Mar. 30	1st O-Mok-See	11:00 AM	Bent Tree Arena	Lisa Sylvia
Sun., Apr. 6	Sharp Top Mtn Ride	TBD	TBD	Rich Vigue
Sun., Apr. 27	Masterson Method Demonstration	TBD	Bent Tree Arena	Julie Heinsman
Sat., May 3	Kentucky Derby Party	TBD	2 Silos Hoedown and Party Barn	TBD
May TBD	Fun Show	TBD	TBD	Julie Heinsman
Sun., May 18	Western Pleasure Show	TBD	Bent Tree Arena	Megan Mathisen, Lorraine Donohue
Sat., June 7	Hillside Farm Trail Challenge	9:30 AM	Sylvia's Farm	Lisa & Jim Sylvia
Sat., June 21	2nd O-Mok-See	TBD	Bent Tree Arena	Lisa Sylvia
Fri., July 4	July 4th Parade	TBD	Downtown Jasper	TBD
Sept. TBD	Chickamauga Ride	TBD	TBD	Ronda Erway
Sat., Sept. 20	Educational	TBD	Bent Tree Arena	Julie Heinsman
Sat., Sept. 27	3rd O-Mok-See	TBD	Bent Tree Arena	Lisa Sylvia
Oct. TBD	East Fork Trip	TBD	TBD	Julie Heinsman
Oct. TBD	Obstacle Course	TBD	Eubank's Farm	Claire Eubanks
Sun., Nov. 9	Educational	TBD	Bent Tree Arena	Julie Heinsman
Dec. TBD	Year-End Party	TBD	TBD	TBD



January 2025



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

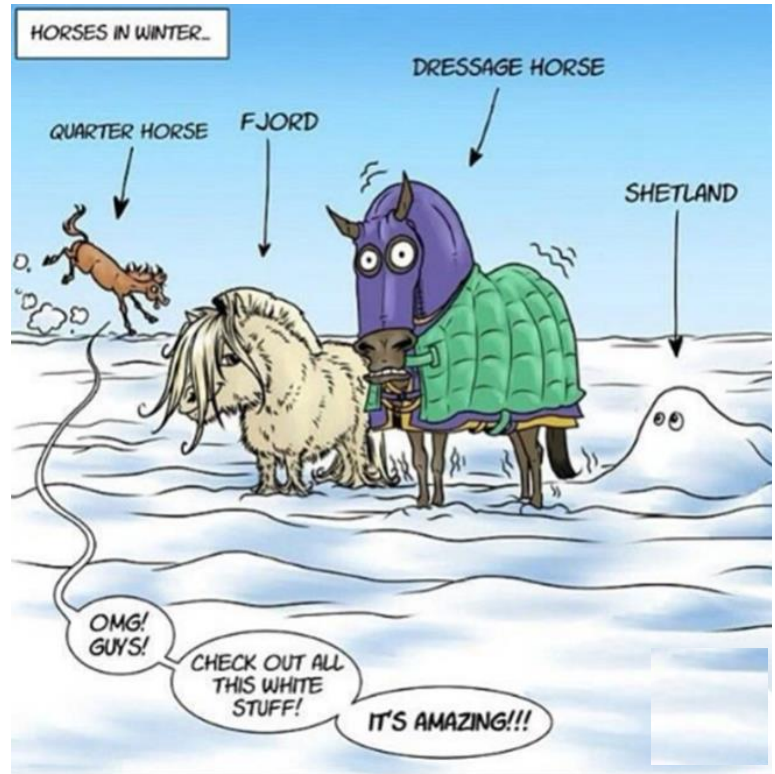
Sat

			1 Happy New Year	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 RSVP Poker Ride
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Poker Ride
19	20 MLK Jr. Day	21	22	23 RSVP Kick-Off Party	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1 Kick-Off Party

See you at our next event!



Laugh Track



Send your joke, cartoon or funny photo to:
NewsletterBTSC@gmail.com

2025 Executive Committee

President:	Julie Heinsman
Vice President:	Karie Kruse
Treasurer:	Ronda Erway
Secretary:	Lisa Sylvia
Bent Tree Liaison:	Bob Crowl
Past President:	Rich Vigue
Past Past President:	Jim Sylvia

2025 Positions

Membership:	Bob Crowl
E-mail Distribution:	Lisa Sylvia
Website Support:	Jim Sylvia
Newsletter Editor:	Karie Kruse

Visit Our Website:

www.BentTreeSaddleClub.com

Join our Group Page on Facebook



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 (not required, for informational purposes only)

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)

2nd: _____ Reg (\$40) _____ Social/Non-Rider (\$20) _____ Under 18 Youth Rider* (\$40) _____

3rd: _____ 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 Crawl 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

* Trail Rides *Social Events *Equestrian Events * Arena/Trail Workdays *Newsletter *Echo Articles

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

Acknowledged and agreed:

1: Signature: _____ Print Name _____ Date: _____

2: Signature: _____ Print Name _____ Date: _____

How did you hear about us

*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.